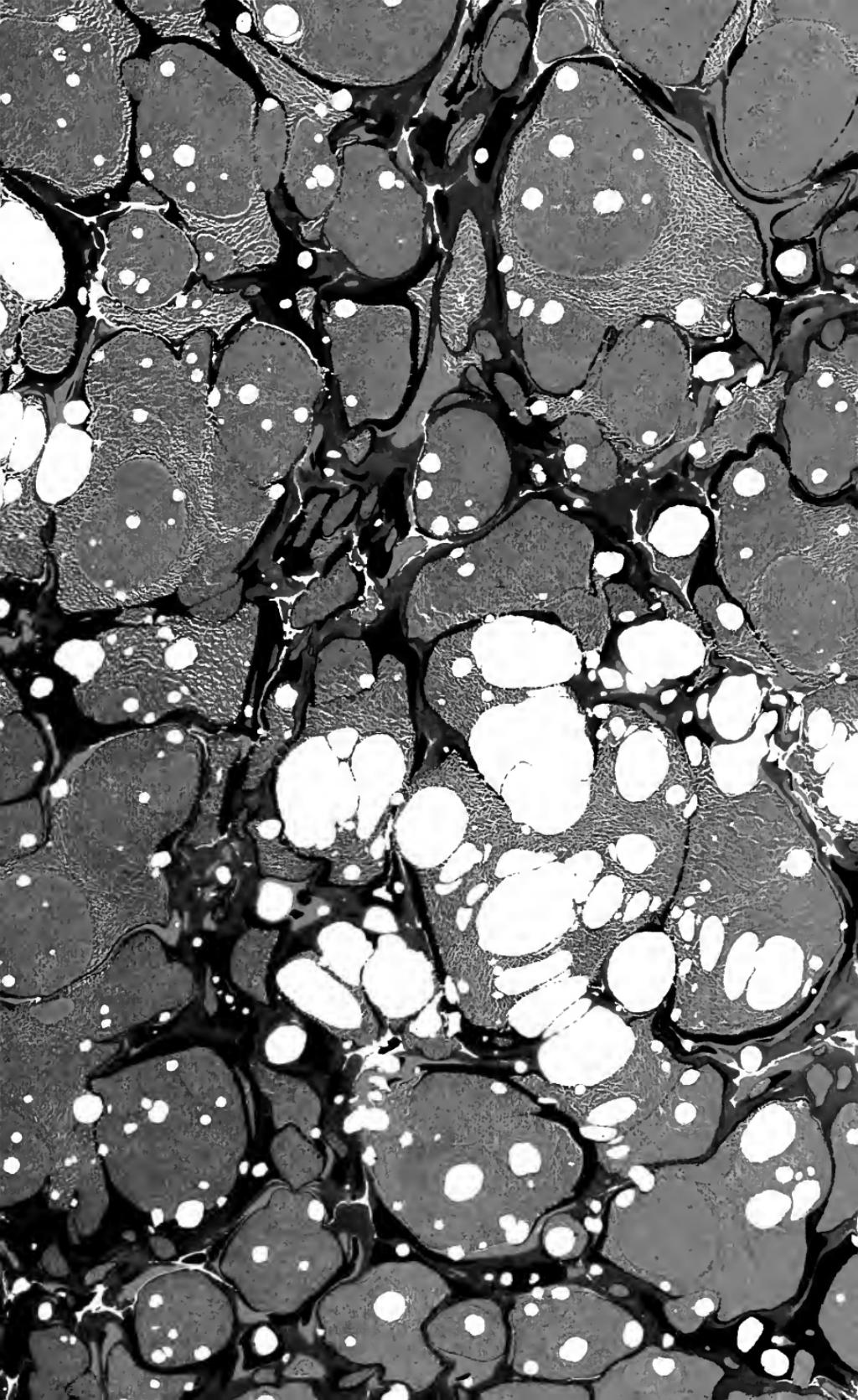


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ESMOND.

A STORY OF QUEEN ANNE'S REIGN.

BY

W. M. THACKERAY.

Author of "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," &c.

VOLUME III.

 The Author of this work gives notice that he reserves to himself the right of translating it.

THE HISTORY
OF
HENRY ESMOND, ESQ.

A COLONEL IN THE SERVICE OF HER MAJESTY
Q. ANNE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

THE THIRD EDITION.

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BOOK III.

CONTAINING THE END OF MR. ESMOND'S
ADVENTURES IN ENGLAND.

THE HISTORY
OF
HENRY ESMOND.



CHAPTER I.

I COME TO AN END OF MY BATTLES AND BRUISES.

THAT feverish desire to gain a little reputation which Esmond had had, left him now perhaps that he had attained some portion of his wish, and the great motive of his ambition was over. His desire for military honour was that it might raise him in Beatrix's eyes. 'Twas next to nobility and wealth the only kind of rank she valued. It was the stake quickest won or lost too; for law is a very long game that requires a life to practise; and to be distinguished in letters or the church would not have forwarded the poor gentleman's plans in the

least. So he had no suit to play but the red one, and he played it; and this, in truth, was the reason of his speedy promotion; for he exposed himself more than most gentlemen do, and risked more to win more. Is he the only man that hath set his life against a stake which may be not worth the winning? Another risks his life (and his honour, too, sometimes) against a bundle of bank-notes, or a yard of blue riband, or a seat in Parliament; and some for the mere pleasure and excitement of the sport; as a field of a hundred huntsmen will do, each out-bawling and out-galloping the other at the tail of a dirty fox, that is to be the prize of the foremost happy conqueror.

When he heard this news of Beatrix's engagement in marriage, Colonel Esmond knocked under to his fate, and resolved to surrender his sword, that could win him nothing now he cared for; and in this dismal frame of mind he determined to retire from the regiment, to the great delight of the captain next in rank to him, who happened to be a young gentleman of good fortune, who eagerly paid Mr. Esmond a thousand guineas for his majority in Webb's regiment, and was knocked on the head the

next campaign. Perhaps Esmond would not have been sorry to share his fate. He was more the Knight of the Woful Countenance than ever he had been. His moodinesf must have made him perfectly odious to his friends under the tents, who like a jolly fellow, and laugh at a melancholy warrior always fighing after Dulcinea at home.

Both the ladies of Castlewood approved of Mr. Esmond quitting the army, and his kind general coincided in his wish of retirement, and helped in the transfer of his commission, which brought a pretty sum into his pocket. But when the Commander-in-Chief came home, and was forced, in spite of himself to appoint Lieutenant-General Webb to the command of a division of the army in Flanders, the Lieutenant-General prayed Colonel Esmond so urgently to be his aide-de-camp and military secretary, that Esmond could not resist his kind patron's entreaties, and again took the field, not attached to any regiment, but under Webb's orders. What must have been the continued agonies of fears* and apprehensions which racked

* What indeed? Psm. xci., 2, 3, 7.—R.E.

the gentle breasts of wives and matrons in those dreadful days, when every Gazette brought accounts of deaths and battles, and when, the present anxiety over, and the beloved person escaped, the doubt still remained that a battle might be fought, possibly, of which the next Flanders letter would bring the account ; so they, the poor tender creatures, had to go on sickening and trembling through the whole campaign. Whatever these terrors were on the part of Esmond's mistress (and that tenderest of women must have felt them most keenly for both her sons, as she called them), she never allowed them outwardly to appear, but hid her apprehension as she did her charities and devotion. 'Twas only by chance that Esmond, wandering in Kensington, found his mistress coming out of a mean cottage there, and heard that she had a score of poor retainers whom she visited and comforted in their sickness and poverty, and who blessed her daily. She attended the early church daily, (though, of a Sunday especially, she encouraged and advanced all sorts of cheerfulness and innocent gaiety in her little household :) and by notes entered into a table-book of hers at this time, and devotional

compositions writ with a sweet artless fervour, such as the best divines could not surpass, showed how fond her heart was, how humble and pious her spirit, what pangs of apprehension she endured silently, and with what a faithful reliance she committed the care of those she loved to the Awful Dispenser of death and life.

As for her ladyship at Chelsea, Esmond's newly-adopted mother, she was now of an age when the danger of any second party doth not disturb the rest much. She cared for trumps more than for most things in life. She was firm enough in her own faith, but no longer very bitter against ours. She had a very good-natured, easy French director, Monsieur Gauthier by name, who was a gentleman of the world, and would take a hand of cards with Dean Atterbury, my lady's neighbour at Chelsea, and was well with all the High Church party. No doubt Monsieur Gauthier knew what Esmond's peculiar position was, for he corresponded with Holt, and always treated Colonel Esmond with particular respect and kindness ; but for good reasons the Colonel and the Abbé never spoke on this matter together, and so they remained perfect good friends.

All the frequenters of my Lady of Chelsea's house were of the Tory and High Church party. Madam Beatrix was as frantick about the King as her elderly kinswoman : she wore his picture on her heart ; she had a piece of his hair ; she vowed he was the most injured, and gallant, and accomplished, and unfortunate, and beautiful of princes. Steele, who quarrelled with very many of his Tory friends, but never with Esmond, used to tell the Colonel that his kinswoman's house was a rendezvous of Tory intrigues ; that Gauthier was a spy ; that Atterbury was a spy ; that letters were constantly going from that house to the Queen at St. Germains ; on which Esmond, laughing, would reply, that they used to say in the army the Duke of Marlborough was a spy too, and as much in correspondence with that family, as any Jesuit. And without entering very eagerly into the controversy, Esmond had frankly taken the side of his family. It seemed to him that King James the Third was undoubtedly king of England by right : and at his sister's death it would be better to have him than a foreigner over us. No man admired King William more ; a hero and a conqueror,

the bravest, justest, wisest of men ;—but 'twas by the sword he conquered the country, and held and governed it by the very same right that the great Cromwell held it, who was truly and greatly a sovereign. But that a foreign despotick Prince, out of Germany, who happened to be descended from King James the First, should take possession of this empire, seemed to Mr. Esmond a monstrous injustice—at least, every Englishman had a right to protest, and the English Prince, the heir-at-law, the first of all. What man of spirit with such a cause would not back it? What man of honour with such a crown to win would not fight for it? But that race was destined. That Prince had himself against him an enemy he could not overcome. He never dared to draw his sword, though he had it. He let his chances slip by as he lay in the lap of opera girls, or snivelled at the knees of priests asking pardon ; and the blood of heroes, and the devotedness of honest hearts, and endurance, courage, fidelity, were all spent for him in vain.

But let us return to my Lady of Chelfea, who when her son Esmond announced to her ladyship

that he proposed to make the ensuing campaign, took leave of him with perfect alacrity, and was down to picquet with her gentlewoman before he had well quitted the room on his last visit. “Tierce to a king,” were the last words he ever heard her say: the game of life was pretty nearly over for the good lady, and three months afterwards she took to her bed, where she flickered out without any pain, so the Abbé Gauthier wrote over to Mr. Esmond, then with his general on the frontier of France. The Lady Castlewood was with her at her ending, and had written too, but these letters must have been taken by a privateer in the packet that brought them; for Esmond knew nothing of their contents until his return to England.

My Lady Castlewood had left everything to Colonel Esmond, “as a reparation for the wrong done to him;” ’twas writ in her will. But her fortune was not much, for it never had been large, and the honest viscountess had wisely funk most of the money she had upon an annuity which terminated with her life. However, there was the house and furniture, plate, and pictures at Chelsea, and a sum of money lying at her

merchant's, Sir Josiah Child, which altogether would realise a sum of near three hundred pounds per annum, so that Mr. Esmond found himself, if not rich, at least easy for life. Likewise, there were the famous diamonds which had been said to be worth fabulous sums, though the goldsmith pronounced they would fetch no more than four thousand pounds. These diamonds, however, Colonel Esmond reserved, having a special use for them: but the Chelsea house, plate, goods, &c., with the exception of a few articles which he kept back, were sold by his orders: and the sums resulting from the sale invested in the publick securities so as to realise the aforesaid annual income of £300.

Having now something to leave, he made a will, and dispatched it home. The army was now in presence of the enemy; and a great battle expected every day. 'Twas known that the General-in-Chief was in disgrace and the parties at home strong against him; and there was no stroke this great and resolute player would not venture to recall his fortune when it seemed desperate. Frank Castlewood was with Colonel Esmond; his general having gladly taken the

young nobleman on to his Staff. His studies of fortifications at Bruxelles were over by this time. The fort he was besieging had yielded, I believe, and my lord had not only marched in with flying colours, but marched out again. He used to tell his boyish wickednesses with admirable humour, and was the most charming young scapegrace in the army.

'Tis needless to say that Colonel Esmond had left every penny of his little fortune to this boy. It was the Colonel's firm conviction that the next battle would put an end to him: for he felt aweary of the fun, and quite ready to bid that and the earth farewell. Frank would not listen to his comrade's gloomy forebodings, but swore they would keep his birthday at Castlewood that autumn, after the campaign. He had heard of the engagement at home. "If Prince Eugene goes to London," says Frank, "and Trix can get hold of him, she'll jilt Ashburnham for his Highness. I tell you, she used to make eyes at the Duke of Marlborough, when she was only fourteen and ogling poor little Blandford. I wouldn't marry her, Harry, no not if her eyes were twice as big. I'll take my fun. I'll enjoy

for the next three years every possible pleasure. I'll sow my wild oats then, and marry some quiet, steady, modest, sensible Viscountesses ; hunt my harriers ; and settle down at Castlewood. Perhaps I'll represent the county—no, damme, *you* shall represent the county. You have the brains of the family. By the Lord, my dear old Harry, you have the best head and the kindest heart in all the army ; and every man says so—and when the Queen dies, and the King comes back, why shouldn't you go to the House of Commons and be a minister, and be made a peer, and that sort of thing ? *You* be shot in the next action ! I wager a dozen of Burgundy you are not touched. Mohun is well of his wound. He is always with Corporal John now. As soon as ever I see his ugly face I'll spit in it. I took lessons of Father —of Captain Holtz at Bruxelles. What a man that is ! He knows everything.” Esmond bade Frank have a care ; that Father Holtz's knowledge was rather dangerous ; not, indeed, knowing as yet how far the Father had pushed his instructions with his young pupil.

The Gazetteers and writers, both of the French and English side, have given accounts

sufficient of that bloody battle of Blarignies or Malplaquet, which was the last and the hardest earned of the victories of the great Duke of Marlborough. In that tremendous combat, near upon two hundred and fifty thousand men were engaged, more than thirty thousand of whom were slain or wounded : (the Allies lost twice as many men as they killed of the French, whom they conquered :) and this dreadful slaughter very likely took place because a great general's credit was shaken at home, and he thought to restore it by a victory. If such were the motives which induced the Duke of Marlborough to venture that prodigious stake, and desperately sacrifice thirty thousand brave lives, so that he might figure once more in a Gazette, and hold his places and pensions a little longer, the event defeated the dreadful and selfish design, for the victory was purchased at a cost which no nation, greedy of glory, as it may be, would willingly pay for any triumph. The gallantry of the French was as remarkable as the furious bravery of their assailants. We took a few score of their flags, and a few pieces of their artillery ; but we left twenty thousand of the bravest soldiers of the

world round about the intrenched lines, from which the enemy was driven. He retreated in perfect good order ; the panic-spell seemed to be broke, under which the French had laboured ever since the disaster of Hochstedt ; and, fighting now on the threshold of their country, they shewed an heroick ardour of resistance, such as had never met us in the course of their aggressive war. Had the battle been more successful, the conqueror might have got the price for which he waged it. As it was (and justly, I think), the party adverse to the Duke in England were indignant at the lavish extravagance of slaughter, and demanded more eagerly than ever the recall of a chief, whose cupidity and desperation might urge him further still. After this bloody fight of Malplaquet, I can answer for it, that in the Dutch quarters and our own, and amongst the very regiments and commanders, whose gallantry was most conspicuous upon this frightful day of carnage, the general cry was, that there was enough of the war. The French were driven back into their own boundary, and all their conquests and booty of Flanders disgorged. As for the Prince of Savoy, with whom our

Commander-in-Chief, for reasons of his own, consoled more closely than ever, 'twas known that he was animated not merely by a political hatred, but by personal rage against the old French king : the Imperial Generalissimo never forgot the flight put by Lewis upon the Abbé de Savoie ; and in the humiliation or ruin of his most Christian Majesty, the Holy Roman Emperor found his account. But what were these quarrels to us, the free citizens of England and Holland ? Despot as he was, the French monarch was yet the chief of European civilisation, more venerable in his age and misfortunes than at the period of his most splendid successes ; whilst his opponent was but a semi-barbarous tyrant, with a pillaging murderous horde of Croats and Pandours, composing a half of his army, filling our camp with their strange figures, bearded like the miscreant Turks their neighbours, and carrying into Christian warfare their native heathen habits of rapine, lust, and murder. Why should the best blood in England and France be shed in order that the Holy Roman and Apostolick master of these ruffians should have his revenge over the Christian king ? And it was to this end we

were fighting; for this that every village and family in England was deplored the death of beloved sons and fathers. We dared not speak to each other, even at table, of Malplaquet, so frightful were the gaps left in our army by the cannon of that bloody action. 'Twas heart-rending, for an officer who had a heart, to look down his line on a parade-day afterwards, and miss hundreds of faces of comrades—humble or of high rank—that had gathered but yesterday full of courage and cheerfulness round the torn and blackened flags. Where were our friends? As the great Duke reviewed us, riding along our lines with his fine suite of prancing aides-de-camp and generals, stopping here and there to thank an officer with those eager smiles and bows, of which his Grace was always lavish, scarce a huzza could be got for him, though Cadogan, with an oath, rode up and cried—“D—n you, why don’t you cheer?” But the men had no heart for that; not one of them but was thinking, “Where’s my comrade?—where’s my brother that fought by me, or my dear captain that led me yesterday?” 'Twas the most gloomy pageant I ever looked on; and

the “Te Deum,” sung by our chaplains, the most woeful and dreary satyre.

Esmond’s general added one more to the many marks of honour which he had received in the front of a score of battles, and got a wound in the groin, which laid him on his back ; and you may be sure he consoled himself by abusing the Commander-in-Chief, as he lay groaning :—“Corporal John’s as fond of me,” he used to say, “as King David was of General Uriah ; and so he always gives me the post of danger.” He persisted, to his dying day, in believing that the Duke intended he should be beat at Wynendael, and sent him purposely with a small force, hoping that he might be knocked on the head there. Esmond and Frank Castlewood both escaped without hurt, though the division which our general commanded suffered even more than any other, having to sustain not only the fury of the enemy’s cannonade, which was very hot and well-served, but the furious and repeated charges of the famous *Maifon du Roy*, which we had to receive and beat off again and again, with volleys of shot and hedges of iron, and our four lines of musqueteers and

pikemen. They said the King of England charged us no less than twelve times that day, along with the French Household. Esmond's late regiment, General Webb's own Fusileers, served in the division with their colonel commanded. The General was thrice in the centre of the square of the Fusileers, calling the fire at the French charges ; and, after the action, his Grace the Duke of Berwick sent his compliments to his old regiment and their colonel for their behaviour on the field.

We drank my Lord Castlewood's health and majority, the 25th of September, the army being then before Mons : and here Colonel Esmond was not so fortunate as he had been in actions much more dangerous, and was hit by a spent ball just above the place where his former wound was, which caused the old wound to open again, fever, spitting of blood, and other ugly symptoms to ensue ; and, in a word, brought him near to death's door. The kind lad, his kinsman, attended his elder comrade with a very praiseworthy affectionateness and care until he was pronounced out of danger by the doctors, when Frank went off, passed the winter at

Bruxelles, and besieged, no doubt, some other fortress there. Very few lads would have given up their pleasures so long and so gaily as Frank did ; his cheerful prattle soothed many long days of Esmond's pain and languor. Frank was supposed to be still at his kinsman's bed-side for a month after he had left it, for letters came from his mother at home full of thanks to the younger gentleman for his care of his elder brother (so it pleased Esmond's mistress now affectionately to style him) ; nor was Mr. Esmond in a hurry to undeceive her, when the good young fellow was gone for his Christmas holiday. It was as pleasant to Esmond on his couch to watch the young man's pleasure at the idea of being free, as to note his simple efforts to disguise his satisfaction on going away. There are days when a flask of champagne at a cabaret, and a red-cheeked partner to share it, are too strong temptations for any young fellow of spirit. I am not going to play the moralist, and cry " Fie." For ages past, I know how old men preach, and what young men practise ; and that patriarchs have had their weak moments, too, long since Father Noah toppled over after discovering the vine.

Frank went off, then, to his pleasures at Bruxelles, in which capital many young fellows of our army declared they found infinitely greater diversion even than in London: and Mr. Henry Esmond remained in his sick room, where he writ a fine comedy, that his mistress pronounced to be sublime, and that was acted no less than three successive nights in London in the next year.

Here, as he lay nursing himself, ubiquitous Mr. Holtz re-appeared, and stopped a whole month at Mons, where he not only won over Colonel Esmond to the King's side in politicks (that side being always held by the Esmond family); but where he endeavoured to re-open the controversial question between the churches once more, and to recal Esmond to that religion in which, in his infancy, he had been baptised. Holtz was a casuist, both dexterous and learned, and presented the case between the English church and his own in such a way, that those who granted his premises ought certainly to allow his conclusions. He touched on Esmond's delicate state of health, chance of dissolution, and so forth; and enlarged upon the immense benefits that the sick man was likely to

forego,—benefits which the Church of England did not deny to those of the Roman communion, as how should she, being derived from that church, and only an offshoot from it. But Mr. Esmond said that his church was the church of his country, and to that he chose to remain faithful: other people were welcome to worship and to subscribe any other set of articles, whether at Rome or at Augsburg. But if the good Father meant that Esmond should join the Roman communion for fear of consequences, and that all England ran the risk of being damned for heresy, Esmond, for one, was perfectly willing to take his chance of the penalty along with the countless millions of his fellow-countrymen, who were bred in the same faith, and along with some of the noblest, the truest, the purest, the wisest, the most pious and learned men and women in the world.

As for the political question, in that Mr. Esmond could agree with the Father much more readily, and had come to the same conclusion, though, perhaps, by a different way. The right-divine about which Dr. Sacheverel and the high-church party in England were just now making a

pother, they were welcome to hold as they chose. If Henry Cromwell, and his father before him, had been crowned and anointed (and bishops enough would have been found to do it), it seemed to Mr. Esmond that they would have had the right-divine just as much as any Plantagenet, or Tudor, or Stuart. But the desire of the country being unquestionably for an hereditary monarchy, Esmond thought an English king out of St. Germains was better and fitter than a German prince from Herrenhausen, and that if he failed to satisfy the nation, some other Englishman might be found to take his place; and so, though with no frantick enthusiasm, or worship of that monstrous pedigree which the Tories chose to consider divine, he was ready to say, “God save King James!” when Queen Anne went the way of kings and commoners.

“I fear, Colonel, you are no better than a republican at heart,” says the priest, with a sigh.

“I am an Englishman,” says Harry, “and take my country as I find her. The will of the nation being for Church and King, I am for church and king, too; but English church, and

English king ; and that is why your church isn't mine, though your king is."

Though they lost the day at Malplaquet, it was the French who were elated by that action, whilst the conquerors were dispirited by it ; and the enemy gathered together a larger army than ever, and made prodigious efforts for the next campaign. Marshal Berwick was with the French this year ; and we heard that Mareschal Villars was still suffering of his wound, was eager to bring our Duke to action, and vowed he would fight us in his coach. Young Castlewood came flying back from Bruxelles, as soon as he heard that fighting was to begin ; and the arrival of the Chevalier de St. George was announced about May. "It's the King's third campaign, and it's mine," Frank liked saying. He was come back a greater Jacobite than ever, and Esmond suspected that some fair conspirators at Bruxelles had been inflaming the young man's ardour. Indeed, he owned that he had a message from the Queen, Beatrix's godmother, who had given her name to Frank's sister the year before he and his sovereign were born.

However desirous Marshal Villars might be to

fight, my Lord Duke did not seem disposed to indulge him this campaign. Last year his Grace had been all for the Whigs and Hanoverians ; but finding, on going to England, his country cold towards himself, and the people in a ferment of high-church loyalty, the Duke comes back to his army cooled towards the Hanoverians, cautious with the Imperialists, and particularly civil and polite towards the Chevalier de St. George. 'Tis certain that messengers and letters were continually passing between his Grace and his brave nephew, the Duke of Berwick, in the opposite camp. No man's caresses were more opportune than his Grace's, and no man ever uttered expressions of regard and affection more generously. He professed to Monsieur de Torcy, so Mr. St. John told the writer, quite an eagerness to be cut in pieces for the exiled Queen and her family ; nay more, I believe, this year he parted with a portion of the most precious part of himself,—his money—which he sent over to the royal exiles. Mr. Tunstal, who was in the Prince's service, was twice or thrice in and out of our camp ; the French, in theirs of Arlieu and about Arras. A little river, the

Canihe, I think 'twas called (but this is writ away from books and Europe; and the only map the writer hath of these scenes of his youth, bears no mark of this little stream), divided our picquets from the enemy's. Our sentries talked across the stream, when they could make themselves understood to each other, and when they could not, grinned, and handed each other their brandy-flasks or their pouches of tobacco. And one fine day of June, riding thither with the officer who visited the outposts (Colonel Esmond was taking an airing on horseback, being too weak for military duty), they came to this river, where a number of English and Scots were assembled, talking to the goodnatured enemy on the other side.

Esmond was especially amused with the talk of one long fellow, with a great curling red moustache, and blue eyes, that was half a dozen inches taller than his swarthy little comrades on the French side of the stream, and being asked by the Colonel, saluted him, and said that he belonged to the Royal Cravats.

From his way of saying "Royal Cravat," Esmond at once knew that the fellow's tongue

had first wagged on the banks of the Liffy, and not the Loire; and the poor soldier—a deserter probably—did not like to venture very deep into French conversation, lest his unlucky brogue should peep out. He chose to restrict himself to such few expressions in the French language as he thought he had mastered easily; and his attempt at disguise was infinitely amusing. Mr. Esmond whistled *Lillibullero*, at which Teague's eyes began to twinkle, and then flung him a dollar, when the poor boy broke out with a “*God bleſſ—that is, Dieu bénisse votre honor*,” that would infallibly have sent him to the Provost-Marshal had he been on our side of the river.

Whilst this parley was going on, three officers on horseback, on the French side, appeared at some little distance, and stopped as if eyeing us, when one of them left the other two, and rode close up to us who were by the stream. “*Look! look!*” says the Royal Cravat, with great agitation, “*pas lui, that's he, not him, l'autre*,” and pointed to the distant officer on a cheſnut horse, with a cuirass shining in the sun, and over it a broad blue ribbon.

“Please to take Mr. Hamilton’s services to my Lord Marlborough—my Lord Duke,” says the gentleman in English; and, looking to see that the party were not hostilely disposed, he added, with a smile, “There’s a friend of yours, gentlemen, yonder; he bids me to say that he saw some of your faces on the 11th of September last year.”

As the gentleman spoke, the other two officers rode up, and came quite close. We knew at once who it was. It was the King, then two-and-twenty years old, tall and slim, with deep brown eyes, that looked melancholy, though his lips wore a smile. We took off our hats and saluted him. No man, sure, could see for the first time without emotion, the youthful inheritor of so much fame and misfortune. It seemed to Mr. Esmond that the Prince was not unlike young Castlewood, whose age and figure he resembled. The Chevalier de St. George acknowledged the salute, and looked at us hard. Even the idlers on our side of the river set up a hurrah. As for the Royal Cravat, he ran to the Prince’s stirrup, knelt down and kissed his boot, and bawled and looked a hundred ejaculations and

blessings. The Prince bade the aide-de-camp give him a piece of money; and when the party saluting us had ridden away, Cravat spat upon the piece of gold by way of benediction, and swaggered away, pouching his coin and twirling his honest carroty moustache.

The officer in whose company Esmond was, the same little captain of Handyside's regiment, Mr. Sterne, who had proposed the garden at Lille, when my Lord Mohun and Esmond had their affair, was an Irishman too, and as brave a little soul as ever wore a sword. “Bedad,” says Roger Sterne, “that long fellow spoke French so beautiful, that I shouldn't have known he wasn't a foreigner, till he broke out with his hulla-balloing, and only an Irish calf can bellow like that.”—And Roger made another remark in his wild way, in which there was sense as well as absurdity—“If that young gentleman,” says he, “would but ride over to our camp instead of Villars's, toss up his hat and say, ‘Here am I, the King, who'll follow me?’ by the Lord, Esmond, the whole army would rise, and carry him home again, and beat Villars, and take Paris by the way.”

The news of the Prince's visit was all through the camp quickly, and scores of ours went down in hopes to see him. Major Hamilton, whom we had talked with, sent back by a trumpet several silver pieces for officers with us. Mr. Esmond received one of these: and that medal, and a recompense not uncommon amongst Princes, were the only rewards he ever had from a Royal person, whom he endeavoured not very long after to serve.

Esmond quitted the army almost immediately after this, following his general home; and, indeed, being advised to travel in the fine weather, and attempt to take no further part in the campaign. But he heard from the army, that of the many who crowded to see the Chevalier de St. George, Frank Castlewood had made himself most conspicuous: my Lord Viscount riding across the little stream bare-headed to where the Prince was, and dismounting and kneeling before him to do him homage. Some said that the Prince had actually knighted him, but my lord denied that statement, though he acknowledged the rest of the story, and said:—"From having been out of favour with Corporal John," as he

called the Duke, “ before his Grace warned him not to commit those follies, and smiled on him cordially ever after.”

“ And he was so kind to me,” Frank writ, “ that I thought I would put in a good word for Master Harry, but when I mentioned your name he looked as black as thunder, and said he had never heard of you.”

CHAPTER II.

I GO HOME, AND HARP ON THE OLD STRING.

FTER quitting Mons and the army, and as he was waiting for a packet at Ostend, Esmond had a letter from his young kinsman Castlewood at Bruxelles, conveying intelligence whereof Frank besought him to be the bearer to London, and which caused Colonel Esmond no small anxiety.

The young scapegrace, being one-and-twenty years old, and being anxious to sow his “wild otes,” as he wrote, had married Mademoiselle de Wertheim, daughter of Count de Wertheim, Chamberlain to the Emperor, and having a post in the Household of the Governor of the Netherlands. “P.S.”—the young gentleman wrote: “Clotilda is *older than me*, which perhaps may be objected to her: but I am so *old a raik*,

that the age makes no difference, and I am determined to reform. We were married at St. Gudule by Father Holt. She is heart and soul for the *good cause*. And here the cry is *Vif-le-Roy*, which my mother will *join in*, and Trix *too*. Break this news to 'em gently: and tell Mr. Finch, my agent, to press the people for their rents, and send me the *ryno* anyhow. Clotilda sings, and plays on the Spinet *beautifully*. She is a fair beauty. And if it's a son, you shall stand *Godfather*. I'm going to leave the army, having had *enuf of soldering*; and my Lord Duke recommends me. I shall pass the winter here: and stop at least until Clo's lying in. I call her *old Clo*; but nobody else shall. She is the cleverest woman in all Bruxelles; understanding painting, musick, poetry, and perfect at *cookery and puddens*. I borded with the Count, that's how I came to know her. There are four Counts her brothers. One an Abbey—three with the Prince's army. They have a lawsuit for *an immence fortune*: but are now in *a pore way*. Break this to mother, who'll take anything from *you*. And write, and bid Finch write *amediatly*. Hostel de l'Aigle Noire, Bruxelles, Flanders."

So Frank had married a Roman Catholick lady, and an heir was expected, and Mr. Esmond was to carry this intelligence to his mistress at London. 'Twas a difficult embassy; and the Colonel felt not a little tremor as he neared the capital.

He reached his inn late, and sent a messenger to Kensington to announce his arrival and visit the next morning. The messenger brought back news that the Court was at Windsor, and the fair Beatrix absent, and engaged in her duties there. Only Esmond's mistress remained in her house at Kensington. She appeared in Court but once in the year; Beatrix was quite the mistress and ruler of the little mansion, inviting the company thither, and engaging in every conceivable frolick of town pleasure. Whilst her mother, acting as the young lady's protectress and elder sister, pursued her own path, which was quite modest and secluded.

As soon as ever Esmond was dressed (and he had been awake long before the town), he took a coach for Kensington, and reached it so early, that he met his dear mistress coming home from morning prayers. She carried her prayer-book,

never allowing a footman to bear it, as everybody else did: and it was by this simple sign Esmond knew what her occupation had been. He called to the coachman to stop, and jumped out as she looked towards him. She wore her hood as usual: and she turned quite pale when she saw him. To feel that kind little hand near to his heart seemed to give him strength. They soon were at the door of her ladyship's house—and within it.

With a sweet sad smile she took his hand and kissed it.

“How ill you have been: how weak you look, my dear Henry,” she said.

’Tis certain the Colonel did look like a ghost, except that ghosts do not look very happy, ’tis said. Esmond always felt so on returning to her after absence, indeed whenever he looked in her sweet kind face.

“I am come back to be nursed by my family,” says he. “If Frank had not taken care of me after my wound, very likely I should have gone altogether.”

“Poor Frank, good Frank!” says his mother. “You’ll always be kind to him, my lord,” she

went on. “The poor child never knew he was doing you a wrong.”

“My lord!” cries out Colonel Esmond. “What do you mean, dear lady?”

“I am no lady,” says she, “I am Rachel Esmond, Francis Esmond’s widow, my lord. I cannot bear that title. Would we never had taken it from him who has it now. But we did all in our power, Henry: we did all in our power; and my lord and I—that is——”

“Who told you this tale, dearest lady,” asked the Colonel.

“Have you not had the letter I writ you? I writ to you at Mons directly I heard it,” says Lady Esmond.

“And from whom?” again asked Colonel Esmond,—and his mistress then told him that on her death-bed the Dowager Countess, sending for her, had presented her with this dismal secret as a legacy. “’Twas very malicious of the dowager,” Lady Esmond said, “to have had it so long, and to have kept the truth from me. ‘Cousin Rachel,’ she said,” and Esmond’s mistress could not forbear smiling as she told the story, “‘Cousin Rachel,’ cries the dowager, ‘I have sent for

you, as the doctors say I may go off any day in this dysentery ; and to ease my conscience of a great load that has been on it. You always have been a poor creature and unfit for great honour, and what I have to say won't, therefore, affect you so much. You must know, cousin Rachel, that I have left my house, plate, and furniture, three thousand pounds in money, and my diamonds that my late revered Saint and Sovereign, King James, presented me with, to my Lord Viscount Castlewood.'

“‘ To my Frank ?’ says Lady Castlewood : ‘ I was in hopes—’

“‘ To Viscount Castlewood, my dear, Viscount Castlewood, and Baron Esmond of Shandon in the kingdom of Ireland, Earl and Marquis of Esmond under patent of his Majesty King James the Second, conferred upon my husband the late Marquis,—for I am Marchioness of Esmond before God and man.’

“‘ And have you left poor Harry nothing, dear Marchioness ?’ asks Lady Castlewood (she hath told me the story completely since with her quiet arch way ; the most charming any woman ever had : and I set down the narrative here at

length so as to have done with it). ‘ And have you left poor Harry nothing,’ ” asks my dear lady ; “ for you know, Henry,” she says with her sweet smile, “ I used always to pity Esau—and I think I am on his side—though papa tried very hard to convince me the other way.”

“ ‘ Poor Harry ! ’ says the old lady. ‘ So you want something left to poor Harry : he, he ! (reach me the drops, cousin.) Well then, my dear, since you want poor Harry to have a fortune : you must understand that ever since the year 1691, a week after the battle of the Boyne, where the Prince of Orange defeated his royal sovereign and father, for which crime he is now suffering in flames (ugh, ugh), Henry Esmond hath been Marquis of Esmond and Earl of Castlewood in the United Kingdom, and Baron and Viscount Castlewood of Shandon in Ireland, and a Baronet,—and his eldest son will be,—by courtesy, styled Earl of Castlewood—he ! he ! What do you think of that, my dear ? ’

“ ‘ Gracious mercy ! how long have you known this ? ’ ” cries the other lady (thinking perhaps that the old Marchioness was wandering in her wits).

“ ‘ My husband, before he was converted, was a wicked wretch,’ the sick sinner continued. ‘ When he was in the Low Countries he seduced a weaver’s daughter ; and added to his wickedness by marrying her. And then he came to this country and married me—a poor girl—a poor innocent young thing—I say,’ though she was past forty, you know, Harry, when she married : and as for being innocent,—‘ Well,’ she went on, ‘ I knew nothing of my lord’s wickedness for three years after our marriage, and after the burial of our poor little boy I had it done over again, my dear, I had myself married by Father Holt in Castlewood chapel as soon as ever I heard the creature was dead—and having a great illness then arising from another sad disappointment I had, the priest came and told me that my lord had a son before our marriage, and that the child was at nurse in England ; and I consented to let the brat be brought home, and a queer little melancholy child it was when it came.

“ ‘ Our intention was to make a priest of him : and he was bred for this, until you perverted him from it, you wicked woman. And I had

again hopes of giving an heir to my lord, when he was called away upon the King's business, and died fighting gloriously at the Boyne water.

“ ‘ Should I be disappointed,—I owed your husband no love, my dear, for he had jilted me in the most scandalous way ; and I thought there would be time to declare the little weaver's son for the true heir. But I was carried off to prison, where your husband was so kind to me,—urging all his friends to obtain my release, and using all his credit in my favour,—that I relented towards him, especially as my director counselled me to be silent ; and that it was for the good of the King's service that the title of our family should continue with your husband the late viscount, whereby his fidelity would be always secured to the King. And the proof of this is, that a year before your husband's death, when he thought of taking a place under the Prince of Orange, Mr. Holt went to him, and told him what the state of the matter was, and obliged him to raise a large sum for his Majesty ; and engaged him in the true cause so heartily, that we were sure of his support on any day when it should be considered advisable to attack the

usurper. Then his sudden death came; and there was a thought of declaring the truth. But 'twas determined to be best for the King's service to let the title still go with the younger branch; and there's no sacrifice a Castlewood wouldn't make for that cause, my dear.

“ ‘ As for Colonel Esmond, he knew the truth already’ (and then, Harry, my mistress said, she told me of what had happened at my dear husband's death-bed). ‘ He doth not intend to take the title, though it belongs to him. But it eases my conscience that you should know the truth, my dear. And your son is lawfully Viscount Castlewood so long as his cousin doth not claim the rank.’ ”

This was the substance of the dowager's revelation. Dean Atterbury had knowledge of it, Lady Castlewood said, and Esmond very well knows how: that divine being the clergyman for whom the late lord had sent on his death-bed: and when Lady Castlewood would instantly have written to her son, and conveyed the truth to him, the Dean's advice was that a letter should be writ to Colonel Esmond rather; that the matter should be submitted to his

decision, by which alone the rest of the family were bound to abide.

“And can my dearest lady doubt what that will be?” says the Colonel.

“It rests with you, Harry, as the head of our house.”

“It was settled twelve years since, by my dear lord’s bed-side,” says Colonel Esmond. “The children must know nothing of this. Frank and his heirs after him must bear our name. ’Tis his rightfully; I have not even a proof of that marriage of my father and mother, though my poor lord, on his death-bed, told me that Father Holt had brought such a proof to Castlewood. I would not seek it when I was abroad. I went and looked at my poor mother’s grave in her convent. What matter to her now? No court of law on earth, upon my mere word, would deprive my Lord Viscount and set me up. I am the head of the house, dear lady; but Frank is Viscount of Castlewood still. And rather than disturb him, I would turn monk, or disappear in America.”

As he spoke so to his dearest mistress, for whom he would have been willing to give up

his life, or to make any sacrifice any day, the fond creature flung herself down on her knees before him, and kissed both his hands in an outbreak of passionate love and gratitude, such as could not but melt his heart, and make him feel very proud and thankful that God had given him the power to show his love for her, and to prove it by some little sacrifice on his own part. To be able to bestow benefits or happiness on those one loves is sure the greatest blessing conferred upon a man,—and what wealth or name, or gratification of ambition or vanity could compare with the pleasure Esmond now had of being able to confer some kindness upon his best and dearest friends ?

“ Dearest saint,” says he—“ purest soul, that has had so much to suffer, that has blessed the poor lonely orphan with such a treasure of love. ’Tis for me to kneel, not for you : ’tis for me to be thankful that I can make you happy. Hath my life any other aim ? Blessed be God that I can serve you ! What pleasure, think you, could all the world give me compared to that ?”

“ Don’t raise me,” she said, in a wild way, to Esmond, who would have lifted her. “ Let

me kneel—let me kneel, and—and—worship you."

Before such a partial judge, as Esmond's dear mistress owned herself to be, any cause which he might plead, was sure to be given in his favour ; and accordingly he found little difficulty in reconciling her to the news whereof he was bearer, of her son's marriage to a foreign lady, Papist though she was. Lady Castlewood never could be brought to think so ill of that religion as other people in England thought of it : she held that ours was undoubtedly a branch of the Church Catholick, but that the Roman was one of the main stems on which, no doubt, many errors had been grafted (she was, for a woman, extraordinarily well versed in this controversy, having acted, as a girl, as secretary to her father, the late dean, and written many of his sermons, under his dictation) ; and if Frank had chosen to marry a lady of the church of south Europe, as she would call the Roman communion, that was no need why she should not welcome her as a daughter-in-law ; and accordingly she writ to her new daughter a very pretty, touching letter (as

Esmond thought, who had cognisance of it before it went), in which the only hint of reproof was a gentle remonstrance that her son had not written to herself, to ask a fond mother's blessing for that step which he was about taking. “ Castlewood knew very well,” so she wrote to her son, “ that she never denied him anything in her power to give, much less would she think of opposing a marriage that was to make his happiness, as she trusted, and keep him out of wild courses, which had alarmed her a good deal: and she besought him to come quickly to England, to settle down in his family house of Castlewood (‘ It is his family house,’ says she, to Colonel Esmond, ‘ though only his own house by your forbearance’) and to receive the accompt of her stewardship during his ten years’ minority.” By care and frugality, she had got the estate into a better condition than ever it had been since the Parliamentary wars; and my lord was now master of a pretty, small income, not encumbered of debts, as it had been, during his father’s ruinous time. “ But in saving my son’s fortune,” says she, “ I fear I have lost a great part of my hold on him.” And, indeed, this was

the case; her ladyship's daughter complaining that their mother did all for Frank, and nothing for her; and Frank himself being dissatisfied at the narrow, simple way of his mother's living at Walcote, where he had been brought up more like a poor parson's son, than a young nobleman that was to make a figure in the world. 'Twas this mistake in his early training, very likely, that set him so eager upon pleasure when he had it in his power; nor is he the first lad that has been spoiled by the over-careful fondness of women. No training is so useful for children, great or small, as the company of their betters in rank or natural parts; in whose society they lose the overweening sense of their own importance, which stay-at-home people very commonly learn.

But, as a prodigal that's sending in a schedule of his debts to his friends, never puts all down, and, you may be sure, the rogue keeps back some immense swingeing bill, that he doesn't dare to own; so the poor Frank had a very heavy piece of news to break to his mother, and which he hadn't the courage to introduce into his first confession. Some misgivings Esmond might have, upon receiving Frank's letter, and knowing

into what hands the boy had fallen ; but whatever these misgivings were, he kept them to himself, not caring to trouble his mistress with any fears that might be groundless.

However, the next mail which came from Bruxelles, after Frank had received his mother's letters there, brought back a joint composition from himself and his wife, who could spell no better than her young scapegrace of her husband. full of expressions of thanks, love, and duty to the Dowager Viscountess, as my poor lady now was styled ; and along with this letter, (which was read in a family council, namely, the viscountess, Mistress Beatrix, and the writer of this memoir, and which was pronounced to be vulgar by the Maid of Honour, and felt to be so by the other two,) there came a private letter for Colonel Esmond, from poor Frank, with another dismal commission for the Colonel to execute, at his best opportunity ; and this was to announce that Frank had seen fit, “ by the exhortations of Mr. Holt, the influence of his Clotilda, and the blessing of Heaven and the saints,” says my lord, demurely, “ to change his religion, and be received into the bosom of that church of which his

sovereign, many of his family, and the greater part of the civilised world were members.” And his lordship added a postscript, of which Esmond knew the inspiring genius very well, for it had the genuine twang of the Seminary, and was quite unlike poor Frank’s ordinary style of writing and thinking; in which he reminded Colonel Esmond that he, too, was, by birth, of that church; and that his mother and sister should have his lordship’s prayers to the saints (an inestimable benefit, truly!) for their conversion.

If Esmond had wanted to keep this secret he could not; for a day or two after receiving this letter, a notice from Bruxelles appeared in the “Post-Boy,” and other prints, announcing that “a young Irish lord, the Viscount C—stlew—d, just come to his majority, and who had served the last campaigns with great credit, as aide-de-camp to his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, had declared for the popish religion at Bruxelles, and had walked in a procession barefoot, with a wax taper in his hand.” The notorious Mr. Holt, who had been employed as a Jacobite agent during the last reign, and many times pardoned

by King William, had been the agent, said the "Post Boy," of this conversion.

The Lady Castlewood was as much cast down by this news as Miss Beatrix was indignant at it. "So," says she, "Castlewood is no longer a home for us, mother. Frank's foreign wife will bring her confessor, and there will be frogs for dinner; and all Tusher's and my grandfather's sermons are flung away upon my brother. I used to tell you that you killed him with the catechism, and that he would turn wicked as soon as he broke from his mammy's leading-strings. O, mother, you would not believe that the young scapegrace was playing you tricks, and that sneak of a Tusher was not a fit guide for him. O, those parsons! I hate 'em all," says Mistress Beatrix, clapping her hands together; "yes, whether they wear cassocks and buckles, or beards and bare feet. There's a horrid Irish wretch who never misses a Sunday at Court, and who pays me compliments there, the horrible man; and if you want to know what parsons are, you should see his behaviour, and hear him talk of his own cloth. They're all the same, whether they're bishops or bonzes, or Indian fakirs. They try

to domineer, and they frighten us with kingdom-come ; and they wear a sanctified air in publick, and expect us to go down on our knees and ask their blessing ; and they intrigue, and they grasp, and they backbite, and they flander worse than the worst courtier or the wickedest old woman. I heard this Mr. Swift sneering at my Lord Duke of Marlborough's courage the other day. He ! that Teague from Dublin ! because his Grace is not in favour dares, to say this of him ; and he says this that it may get to her Majesty's ear, and to coax and wheedle Mrs. Masham. They say the Elector of Hanover has a dozen of mistresses in his court at Herrenhausen, and if he comes to be king over us, I wager that the bishops and Mr. Swift, that wants to be one, will coax and wheedle them. O, those priests and their grave airs ! I'm sick of their square-toes and their rustling cassocks. I should like to go to a country where there was not one, or to turn Quaker, and get rid of 'em ; and I would, only the dres is not becoming, and I've much too pretty a figure to hide it. Haven't I, cousin?" and here she glanced at her person and the looking-glass, which told her rightly

that a more beautiful shape and face never were seen.

“ I made that onslaught on the priests,” says Miss Beatrix, afterwards, “ in order to divert my poor dear mother’s anguish about Frank. Frank is as vain as a girl, cousin. Talk of us girls being vain, what are *we* to you? It was easy to see that the first woman who chose would make a fool of him, or the first robe—I count a priest and a woman all the same. We are always caballing; we are not answerable for the fibs we tell; we are always cajoling and coaxing, or threatening; and we are always making mischief, Colonel Esmond—mark my word for that, who know the world, sir, and have to make my way in it. I see as well as possible how Frank’s marriage hath been managed. The Count, our papa-in-law, is always away at the coffee-house. The Countess, our mother, is always in the kitchen looking after the dinner. The Countess, our sister, is at the spinet! When my lord comes to say he is going on the campaign, the lovely Clotilda bursts into tears, and faints so; he catches her in his arms—no, sir, keep your distance, cousin, if you please—she

cries on his shoulder, and he says, ‘O, my divine, my adored, my beloved Clotilda, are you forry to part with me?’ ‘O, my Francisco,’ says she, ‘O, my lord!’ and at this very instant mamma and a couple of young brothers, with mustachios and long rapiers, come in from the kitchen, where they have been eating bread and onions. Mark my word, you will have all this woman’s relations at Castlewood three months after she has arrived there. The old count and countefs, and the young counts and all the little countesfes her sisters. Counts! everyone of these wretches says he is a count. Guiscard, that stabbed Mr. Harvey, said he was a count; and I believe he was a barber. All Frenchmen are barbers.—Fiddle-dee! don’t contradict me—or else dancing-masters, or else priests;” and so she rattled on.

“Who was it taught *you* to dance, Cousin Beatrix?” says the Colonel.

She laughed out the air of a minuet, and swept a low curtsey, coming up to the recover with the prettiest little foot in the world pointed out. Her mother came in as she was in this attitude; my lady had been in her closet having taken poor

Frank's conversion in a very serious way ; the madcap girl ran up to her mother, put her arms round her waist, kissed her, tried to make her dance, and said : "Don't be silly, you kind little mamma, and cry about Frank turning Papist. What a figure he must be, with a white sheet and a candle walking in a procession barefoot !" And she kicked off her little slippers (the wonderfulest little shoes with wonderful tall red heels, Esmond pounced upon one as it fell close beside him) and she put on the drollest little *mouse*, and marched up and down the room holding Esmond's cane by way of taper. Serious as her mood was, Lady Castlewood could not refrain from laughing ; and as for Esmond he looked on with that delight with which the sight of this fair creature always inspired him : never had he seen any woman so arch, so brilliant, and so beautiful.

Having finished her march, she put out her foot for her slipper. The Colonel knelt down : "If you will be Pope I will turn Papist," says he ; and her Holiness gave him gracious leave to kiss the little stockinged foot before he put the slipper on.

Mamma's feet began to pat on the floor during

this operation, and Beatrix, whose bright eyes nothing escaped, saw that little mark of impatience. She ran up and embraced her mother, with her usual cry of, “O you silly little mamma: your feet are quite as pretty as mine,” says she: “they are, cousin, though she hides ‘em; but the shoemaker will tell you that he makes for both off the same last.”

“ You are taller than I am, dearest,” says her mother, blushing over her whole sweet face—“and—and it is your hand, my dear, and not your foot he wants you to give him,” and she said it with a hysterick laugh, that had more of tears than laughter in it; laying her head on her daughter’s fair shoulder, and hiding it there. They made a very pretty picture together, and looked like a pair of sisters—the sweet simple matron seeming younger than her years, and her daughter, if not older, yet, somehow, from a commanding manner and grace which she possessed above most women, her mother’s superior and protectress.

“ But O !” cries my mistress, recovering herself after this scene, and returning to her usual sad tone, “ ‘tis a shame that we should laugh and be

making merry on a day when we ought to be down on our knees and asking pardon."

" Asking pardon for what?" says saucy Mrs. Beatrix,—" because Frank takes it into his head to fast on Fridays, and worship images? You know if you had been born a papist, mother, a papist you would have remained to the end of your days. 'Tis the religion of the King and of some of the best quality. For my part, I'm no enemy to it, and think Queen Bess was not a penny better than Queen Mary."

" Hush, Beatrix! Do not jest with sacred things, and remember of what parentage you come," cries my lady. Beatrix was ordering her ribbons, and adjusting her tucker, and performing a dozen provoking pretty ceremonies, before the glass. The girl was no hypocrite at least. She never at that time could be brought to think but of the world and her beauty; and seemed to have no more sense of devotion than some people have of musick, that cannot distinguish one air from another. Esmond saw this fault in her, as he saw many others—a bad wife would Beatrix Esmond make, he thought, for any man under the degree of a Prince. She was born to shine in

great assemblies, and to adorn palaces, and to command everywhere—to conduct an intrigue of politicks, or to glitter in a queen's train. But to sit at a homely table, and mend the stockings of a poor man's children? that was no fitting duty for her, or at least one that she wouldn't have broke her heart in trying to do. She was a princess, though she had scarce a shilling to her fortune; and one of her subjects—the most abject and devoted wretch, sure, that ever drivelled at a woman's knees—was this unlucky gentleman; who bound his good sense, and reason, and independence, hand and foot; and submitted them to her.

And who does not know how ruthlessly women will tyrannise when they are let to domineer? and who does not know how useless advice is? I could give good counsel to my descendants, but I know they'll follow their own way, for all their grandfather's sermon. A man gets his own experience about women, and will take nobody's hearsay; nor, indeed, is the young fellow worth a fig that would. 'Tis I that am in love with my mistress, not my old grandmother that counsels me; 'tis I that have fixed the value of the

thing I would have, and know the price I would pay for it. It may be worthless to you, but 'tis all my life to me. Had Esmond possessed the Great Mogul's crown and all his diamonds, or all the Duke of Marlborough's money, or all the ingots sunk at Vigo, he would have given them all for this woman. A fool he was, if you will ; but so is a sovereign a fool, that will give half a principality for a little crystal as big as a pigeon's egg, and called a diamond : so is a wealthy nobleman a fool, that will face danger or death, and spend half his life, and all his tranquillity, caballing for a blue riband : so is a Dutch merchant a fool, that hath been known to pay ten thousand crowns for a tulip. There's some particular prize we all of us value, and that every man of spirit will venture his life for. With this it may be to achieve a great reputation for learning ; with that, to be a man of fashion, and the admiration of the town ; with another, to consummate a great work of art or poetry, and go to immortality that way ; and with another, for a certain time of his life, the sole object and aim is a woman.

Whilst Esmond was under the domination of

this passion, he remembers many a talk he had with his intimates, who used to rally Our Knight of the Rueful Countenance at his devotion, whereof he made no disguise, to Beatrix ; and it was with replies such as the above he met his friends' satire. “ Granted, I am a fool,” says he, “ and no better than you ; but you are no better than I. You have your folly you labour for ; give me the charity of mine. What flatteries do you, Mr. St. John, stoop to whisper in the ears of a queen's favourite ? What nights of labour doth not the laziest man in the world endure, foregoing his bottle, and his boon companions, foregoing Lais, in whose lap he would like to be yawning, that he may prepare a speech full of lies, to cajole three hundred stupid country-gentlemen in the House of Commons, and get the hiccupping cheers of the October Club ? What days will you spend in your jolting chariot (Mr. Esmond often rode to Windsor, and especially, of later days, with the secretary) ? What hours will you pass on your gouty feet,—and how humbly will you kneel down to present a despatch—you, the proudest man in the world, that has not knelt to God

since you were a boy, and in that posture whisper, flatter, adore almost, a stupid woman, that's often boozy with too much meat and drink, when Mr. Secretary goes for his audience? If my pursuit is vanity, sure yours is too." And then the Secretary would fly out in such a rich flow of eloquence, as this pen cannot pretend to recal; advocating his scheme of ambition, showing the great good he would do for his country when he was the undisputed chief of it; backing his opinion with a score of pat sentences from Greek and Roman authorities (of which kind of learning he made rather an ostentatious display), and scornfully vaunting the very arts and meannesses by which fools were to be made to follow him, opponents to be bribed or silenced, doubters converted, and enemies overawed.

"I am Diogenes," says Esmond, laughing, "that is taken up for a ride in Alexander's chariot. I have no desire to vanquish Darius or to tame Bucephalus. I do not want what you want, a great name or a high place: to have them would bring me no pleasure. But my moderation is taste, not virtue; and I know that what I do

want, is as vain as that which you long after. Do not grudge me my vanity, if I allow yours; or rather, let us laugh at both indifferently, and at ourselves, and at each other."

"If your charmer holds out," says St. John, "at this rate she may keep you twenty years besieging her, and surrender by the time you are seventy, and she is old enough to be a grandmother. I do not say the pursuit of a particular woman is not as pleasant a pastime as any other kind of hunting," he added; "only, for my part, I found the game won't run long enough. They knock under too soon—that's the fault I find with 'em."

"The game which you pursue is in the habit of being caught, and used to being pulled down," says Mr. Esmond.

"But Dulcinea del Toboso is peerless, eh?" says the other. "Well, honest Harry, go and attack windmills—perhaps thou art not more mad than other people," St. John added, with a sigh.

CHAPTER III.



A PAPER OUT OF THE SPECTATOR.

DO TH any young gentleman of my progeny, who may read his old grandfather's papers, chance to be presently suffering under the passion of Love? There is a humiliating cure, but one that is easy and almost specifick for the malady—which is, to try an alibi. Esmond went away from his mistress and was cured a half dozen times; he came back to her side, and instantly fell ill again of the fever. He vowed that he could leave her and think no more of her, and so he could pretty well, at least, succeed in quelling that rage and longing he had whenever he was with her; but as soon as he returned he was as bad as ever again. Truly a ludicrous and pitiable object, at least exhausting everybody's pity but his dearest mistress's, Lady Castlewood's, in whose

tender breast he reposèd all his dreary confessions, and who never tired of hearing him and pleading for him.

Sometimes Esmond would think there was hope. Then again he would be plagued with despair, at some impertinence or coquetry of his mistress. For days they would be like brother and sister, or the dearest friends, she simple, fond and charming, he happy beyond measure at her good behaviour. But this would all vanish on a sudden: Either he would be too pressing, and hint his love, when she would rebuff him instantly, and give his vanity a box on the ear: or he would be jealous, and with perfect good reason, of some new admirer that had sprung up, or some rich young gentleman newly arrived in the town, that this incorrigible flirt would set her nets and baits to draw in. If Esmond remonstrated, the little rebel would say—“Who are you? I shall go my own way, sirrah; and that way is towards a husband, and I don’t want *you* on the way. I am for your betters, Colonel, for your betters: do you hear that? You might do if you had an estate and were younger; only eight years older than I, you say! pish, you are

a hundred years older. You are an old, old, Graveairs, and I should make you miserable, that would be the only comfort I should have in marrying you. But you have not money enough to keep a cat decently after you have paid your man his wages, and your landlady her bill. Do you think I'm going to live in a lodging, and turn the mutton at a string whilst your honour nurses the baby? Fiddlestick, and why did you not get this nonsense knocked out of your head when you were in the wars? You are come back more dismal and dreary than ever. You and mamma are fit for each other. You might be *Darby and Joan*, and play cribbage to the end of your lives."

"At least you own to your worldliness, my poor Trix," says her mother.

"Worldliness—O' my pretty lady. Do you think that I am a child in the nursery, and to be frightened by Bogey? Worldliness, to be sure; and pray, madam, where is the harm of wishing to be comfortable? When you are gone, you dearest old woman, or when I am tired of you and have run away from you, where shall I go? Shall I go and be head nurse to my Popish

sister-in-law, take the children their phisick, and whip 'em, and put 'em to bed whey they are naughty. Shall I be Castlewood's upper servant, and perhaps marry Tom Tusher? *Merci!* I have been long enough Frank's humble servant. Why am I not a man? I have ten times his brains, and had I worn the—well don't let your ladyship be frightened—had I worn a sword and perriwig instead of this mantle and commode, to which nature has condemned me—(though 'tis a pretty stuff, too—cousin Esmond! you will go to the Exchange to-morrow, and get the exact counterpart of this riband, sir, do you hear?)—I would have made our name talked about. So would Graveairs here have made something out of our name if he had represented it. My Lord Graveairs would have done very well. Yes you have a very pretty way, and would have made a very decent grave speaker," and here she began to imitate Esmond's way of carrying himself, and speaking to his face, and so ludicrously, that his mistress burst out a laughing, and even he himself could see there was some likeness in the fantastical malicious caricature.

"Yes," says she, "I solemnly vow, own and

confess, that I want a good husband. Where's the harm of one? My face is my fortune. Who'll come, buy, buy, buy! I cannot toil, neither can I spin, but I can play twenty-three games on the cards. I can dance the last dance, I can hunt the stag, and I think I could shoot flying. I can talk as wicked as any woman of my years, and know enough stories to amuse a sulky husband for at least one thousand and one nights. I have a pretty taste for dress, diamonds, gambling, and old China. I love sugar-plums, Malines lace (that you brought me, cousin, is very pretty), the opera, and everything that is useless and costly. I have got a monkey and a little black boy,—Pompey, sir, go and give a dish of chocolate to Colonel Graveairs,—and a parrot and a spaniel, and I must have a husband. Cupid, you hear?"

"*Is Missis,*" says Pompey, a little grinning negro Lord Peterborow gave her, with a bird of Paradise in his turbant: and a collar with his mistress's name on it.

"*Is Missis!*" says Beatrix, imitating the child. "And if husband not come, Pompey must go fetch one."

And Pompey went away grinning with his chocolate tray, as Miss Beatrix ran up to her mother and ended her sally of mischief in her common way, with a kiss—no wonder that upon paying such a penalty her fond judge pardoned her.

When Mr. Esmond came home, his health was still shattered ; and he took a lodging near to his mistresses, at Kensington, glad enough to be served by them, and to see them day after day. He was enabled to see a little company—and of the sort he liked best. Mr. Steele and Mr. Addifon both did him the honour to visit him ; and drank many a flask of good claret at his lodging, whilst their entertainer, through his wound, was kept to diet drink and gruel. These gentlemen were Whigs, and great admirers of my Lord Duke of Marlborough ; and Esmond was entirely of the other party. But their different views of politicks did not prevent the gentlemen from agreeing in private, nor from allowing, on one evening when Esmond's kind old patron, Lieutenant-General Webb, with a stick and a crutch, hobbled up to the Colonel's

lodging (which was prettily situate at Knightsbridge, between London and Kensington, and looking over the Gardens), that the Lieutenant-General was a noble and gallant soldier,—and even that he had been hardly used in the Wynendael affair. He took his revenge in talk, that must be confessed; and if Mr. Addison had had a mind to write a poem about Wynendael, he might have heard from the commander's own lips the story a hundred times over.

Mr. Esmond, forced to be quiet, betook himself to literature for a relaxation, and composed his comedy, whereof the prompter's copy lieth in my walnut escrutoire, sealed up and docketted “*The Faithful Fool, a Comedy, as it was performed by her Majesty's Servants.*” 'Twas a very sentimental piece; and Mr. Steele, who had more of that kind of sentiment than Mr. Addison, admired it, whilst the other rather sneered at the performance; though he owned that, here and there, it contained some pretty strokes. He was bringing out his own play of “*Cato*” at the time, the blaze of which quite extinguished Esmond's farthing candle: and his name was never put to the piece,

which was printed as by a Person of Quality. Only nine copies were sold, though Mr. Dennis, the great critick, praised it, and said 'twas a work of great merit; and Colonel Esmond had the whole impression burned one day in a rage, by Jack Lockwood, his man.

All this comedy was full of bitter satirick strokes against a certain young lady. The plot of the piece was quite a new one. A young woman was represented with a great number of suitors, selecting a pert fribble of a peer, in place of the hero; (but ill-acted, I think, by Mr. Wilks, the Faithful Fool,) who persisted in admiring her. In the fifth act, Teraminta was made to discover the merits of Eugenio (the F. F.), and to feel a partiality for him too late; for he announced that he had bestowed his hand and estate upon Rosaria, a country lass, endowed with every virtue. But it must be owned that the audience yawned through the play; and that it perished on the third night, with only half a dozen persons to behold its agonies. Esmond and his two mistresses came to the first night, and Miss Beatrix fell asleep; whilst her mother, who had not been to a play since King James

the Second's time, thought the piece, though not brilliant, had a very pretty moral.

Mr. Esmond dabbled in letters, and wrote a deal of prose and verse at this time of leisure. When displeased with the conduct of Miss Beatrix, he would compose a satyre, in which he relieved his mind. When smarting under the faithlessness of women, he dashed off a copy of verses, in which he held the whole sex up to scorn. One day, in one of these moods, he made a little joke, in which (swearing him to secrefy) he got his friend Dick Steele to help him: and, composing a paper, he had it printed exactly like Steele's paper, and by his printer, and laid on his mistress's breakfast-table the following:—

“SPECTATOR.

“No. 341.

“Tuesday, April 1, 1712.

Mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur.—HORACE.

Thyself the moral of the Fable see.—CREECH.

“Jocasta is known as a woman of learning and fashion, and as one of the most amiable persons of this Court and country. She is at home two mornings of the week, and all the wits and a few of the beauties of London flock

to her assemblies. When she goes abroad to Tunbridge or the Bath, a retinue of adorers rides the journey with her ; and, besides the London beaux, she has a crowd of admirers at the Wells, the polite amongst the natives of Sussex and Somerset pressing round her tea-tables, and being anxious for a nod from her chair. Jocasta's acquaintance is thus very numerous. Indeed, 'tis one smart writer's work to keep her visiting-book—a strong footman is engaged to carry it ; and it would require a much stronger head, even than Jocasta's own, to remember the names of all her dear friends.

“ Either at Epsom Wells or at Tunbridge (for of this important matter Jocasta cannot be certain) it was her ladyship's fortune to become acquainted with a young gentleman, whose conversation was so sprightly, and manners amiable, that she invited the agreeable young spark to visit her if ever he came to London, where her house in Spring Garden should be open to him. Charming as he was, and without any manner of doubt a pretty fellow, Jocasta hath such a regiment of the like continually marching round her standard, that 'tis no wonder her attention

is distracted amongst them. And so, though this gentleman made a considerable impression upon her, and touched her heart for at least three-and-twenty minutes, it must be owned that she has forgotten his name. He is a dark man, and may be eight-and-twenty years old. His dress is sober, though of rich materials. He has a mole on his forehead over his left eye ; has a blue ribbon to his cane and sword, and wears his own hair.

“ *Jocasta* was much flattered by beholding her admirer (for that everybody admires who sees her is a point which she never can for a moment doubt) in the next pew to her at Saint James’s Church last Sunday ; and the manner in which he appeared to go to sleep during the sermon—though from under his fringed eyelids it was evident he was casting glances of respectful rapture towards *Jocasta*—deeply moved and interested her. On coming out of church, he found his way to her chair, and made her an elegant bow as she stepped into it. She saw him at Court afterwards, where he carried himself with a most distinguished air, though none of her acquaintances knew his name ; and the next

night he was at the play, where her ladyship was pleased to acknowledge him from the side-box.

“ During the whole of the comedy she racked her brains so to remember his name, that she did not hear a word of the piece: and having the happiness to meet him once more in the lobby of the playhouse, she went up to him in a flutter, and bade him remember that she kept two nights in the week, and that she longed to see him at Spring Garden.

“ He appeared on Tuesday, in a rich suit, showing a very fine taste both in the tailor and wearer; and though a knot of us were gathered round the charming Jocasta, fellows who pretended to know every face upon the town, not one could tell the gentleman’s name in reply to Jocasta’s eager inquiries, flung to the right and left of her as he advanced up the room with a bow that would become a duke.

“ Jocasta acknowledged this salute with one of those smiles and curtsies of which that lady hath the secret. She curtsies with a languishing air, as if to say, ‘ You are come at last. I have been pining for you:’ and then she finishes her victim with a killing look, which declares: ‘ O

Philander ! I have no eyes but for you.' Camilla hath as good a curtsey perhaps, and Thalestris much such another look ; but the glance and the curtsey together belong to Jocasta of all the English beauties alone.

“ ‘ Welcome to London, sir,’ says she. ‘ One can see you are from the country by your looks.’ She would have said ‘ Epsom,’ or ‘ Tunbridge,’ had she remembered rightly at which place she had met the stranger ; but, alas ! she had forgotten.

“ The gentleman said ‘ he had been in town but three days ; and one of his reasons for coming hither was to have the honour of paying his court to Jocasta.’

“ She said ‘ The waters had agreed with her but indifferently.’

“ ‘ The waters were for the sick,’ the gentleman said : ‘ the young and beautiful came but to make them sparkle. And, as the clergyman read the service on Sunday,’ he added, ‘ your ladyship reminded me of the angel that visited the pool.’ A murmur of approbation saluted this folly. Manilio, who is a wit when he is not at cards, was in such a rage that he revoked when he heard it.

“ Jocasta was an angel visiting the waters ; but at which of the Bethesdas ? She was puzzled more and more ; and, as her way always is, looked the more innocent and simple, the more artful her intentions were.

“ ‘ We were discoursing,’ says she, ‘ about spelling of names and words when you came. Why should we say goold and write gold, and call c h i n a chayne, and Cavendish Candish, and Cholmondeley Chumley ? If we call Pulteney Poltney, why shouldn’t we call poultry pultry— and—’

“ ‘ Such an enchantress as your ladyship,’ says he, ‘ is mistress of all sorts of spells.’ But this was Dr. Swift’s pun, and we all knew it.

“ ‘ And—and how do you spell your name ? ’ says she, coming to the point, at length ; for this sprightly conversation had lasted much longer than is here set down, and been carried on through at least three dishes of tea.

“ ‘ O, madam,’ says he, ‘ *I spell my name with the y.* ’ And laying down his dish, my gentleman made another elegant bow, and was gone in a moment.

“ Jocasta hath had no sleep since this

mortification, and the stranger's disappearance. If baulked in anything, she is sure to lose her health and temper ; and we, her servants, suffer, as usual, during the angry fits of our Queen. Can you help us, Mr. Spectator, who know everything, to read this riddle for her, and set at rest all our minds ? We find in her list, Mr. Berty, Mr. Smith, Mr. Pike, Mr. Tyler—who may be Mr. Bertie, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Tiler, for what we know. She hath turned away the clerk of her visiting-book, a poor fellow, with a great family of children. Read me this riddle, good Mr. Shortface, and oblige your admirer,

“ **ŒDIPUS.** ”

“ *The Trumpet Coffee-house, Whitehall.*

“ **MR. SPECTATOR,** —

“ I am a gentleman but little acquainted with the town, though I have had an university education, and passed some years serving my country abroad, where my name is better known than in the coffee-houses in St. James's.

“ Two years since my uncle died, leaving me a pretty estate in the county of Kent ; and being at Tunbridge Wells last summer, after my

mourning was over, and on the look-out, if truth must be told, for some young lady who would share with me the solitude of my great Kentish house, and be kind to my tenantry (for whom a woman can do a great deal more good than the best-intentioned man can), I was greatly fascinated by a young lady of London, who was the toast of all the company at the Wells. Every one knows Saccharissa's beauty; and I think, Mr. Spectator, no one better than herself.

“ My table-book informs me that I danced no less than seven and twenty sets with her at the Assembly. I treated her to the fiddles twice. I was admitted on several days at her lodging, and received by her with a great deal of distinction, and, for a time, was entirely her slave. It was only when I found, from common talk of the company at the Wells, and from narrowly watching one, who I once thought of asking the most sacred question a man can put to a woman, that I became aware how unfit she was to be a country gentleman's wife; and that this fair creature was but a heartless worldly jilt, playing with affections that she never meant to return, and, indeed, incapable of returning them. 'Tis

admiration such women want, not love that touches them ; and I can conceive, in her old age, no more wretched creature than this lady will be, when her beauty hath deserted her, when her admirers have left her, and she hath neither friendship nor religion to console her.

“ Business calling me to London, I went to St. James’s Church last Sunday, and there opposite me, sat my beauty of the Wells. Her behaviour during the whole service was so pert, languishing, and absurd ; she flirted her fan, and ogled and eyed me in a manner so indecent ; that I was obliged to shut my eyes, so as actually not to see her, and whenever I opened them beheld hers (and very bright they are), still staring at me. I fell in with her afterwards at Court, and at the playhouse ; and here nothing would satisfy her but she must elbow through the crowd and speak to me, and invite me to the assembly, which she holds at her house, not very far from Ch-r-ng Cr-ss.

“ Having made her a promise to attend, of course I kept my promise ; and found the young widow in the midst of a half dozen of card-tables, and a crowd of wits and admirers. I made the

best bow I could, and advanced towards her ; and saw by a peculiar puzzled look in her face though she tried to hide her perplexity, that she had forgotten even my name.

“ Her talk, artful as it was, convinced me that I had guessed aright. She turned the conversation most ridiculously upon the spelling of names and words ; and I replied with as ridiculous fulsome compliments as I could pay her : indeed, one in which I compared her to an angel visiting the sick wells, went a little too far : nor should I have employed it, but that the allusion came from the Second Lesson last Sunday, which we both had heard, and I was pressed to answer her.

“ Then she came to the question, which I knew was awaiting me, and asked how I *spelt* my name ? ‘ Madam,’ says I, turning on my heel, ‘ I spell it with the y.’ And so I left her, wondering at the light-heartedness of the town-people, who forget and make friends so easily, and resolved to look elsewhere for a partner for your constant reader,

CYMON WYLDONATS.

“ You know my real name, Mr. Spectator,

in which there is no such letter as *huppsilon*. But if the lady, whom I have called Saccharissa, wonders that I appear no more at the tea-tables, she is hereby respectfully informed the reason y."

The above is a parable, whereof the writer will now expound the meaning. Jocasta was no other than Miss Esmond, Maid of Honour to her Majesty. She had told Mr. Esmond this little story of having met a gentleman somewhere, and forgetting his name, when the gentleman, with no such malicious intentions as those of "Cymon" in the above fable, made the answer simply as above; and we all laughed to think how little Mistress Jocasta-Beatrix had profited by her artifice and precautions.

As for Cymon he was intended to represent yours and her very humble servant, the writer of the *apologue* and of this story, which we had printed on a "Spectator" paper at Mr. Steele's office, exactly as those famous journals were printed, and which was laid on the table at breakfast in place of the real newspaper. Mistress Jocasta, who had plenty of wit, could not live without her "Spectator" to her tea; and this sham "Spectator" was

intended to convey to the young woman that she herself was a flirt, and that Cymon was a gentleman of honour and resolution, seeing all her faults, and determined to break the chains once and for ever.

For though enough hath been said about this love-business already—enough, at least, to prove to the writer's heirs what a silly fond fool their old grandfather was, who would like them to consider him as a very wise old gentleman ;—yet not near all has been told concerning this matter, which if it were allowed to take in Esmond's journal the space it occupied in his time, would weary his kinsmen and women of a hundred years time beyond all endurance ; and form such a Diary of folly and drivelling, raptures and rage, as no man of ordinary vanity would like to leave behind him.

The truth is, that, whether she laughed at him or encouraged him ; whether she smiled or was cold and turned her smiles on another ; worldly and ambitious, as he knew her to be ; hard and careless as she seemed to grow with her court life, and a hundred admirers that came to her and left her ; Esmond, do what he would,

never could get Beatrix out of his mind ; thought of her constantly at home or away : if he read his name in a *Gazette*, or escaped the shot of a cannon-ball or a greater danger in the campaign, as has happened to him more than once, the instant thought after the honour atchieved or the danger avoided, was “What will *she* say of it?” “Will this distinction or the idea of this peril elate her or touch her, so as to be better inclined towards me?” He could no more help this passionate fidelity of temper than he could help the eyes he saw with — one or the other seemed a part of his nature ; and knowing every-one of her faults as well as the keenest of her detractors, and the folly of an attachment to such a woman, of which the fruition could never bring him happiness for above a week, there was yet a charm about this Circe from which the poor deluded gentleman could not free himself ; and, for a much longer period than Ulysses (another middle-aged officer, who had travelled much, and been in the foreign wars), Esmond felt himself entralled and besotted by the wiles of this enchantress. Quit her ! He could no more quit her, as the Cymon of his story was made to quit

his false one, than he could lose his consciousness of yesterday. She had but to raise her finger, and he would come back from ever so far ; she had but to say I have discarded such and such an adorer, and the poor infatuated wretch would be sure to come and *rôder* about her mother's house, willing to be put on the ranks of suitors, though he knew he might be cast off the next week. If he were like Ulysses in his folly at least, she was in so far like Penelope, that she had a crowd of suitors, and undid day after day, and night after night, the handywork of fascination and the web of coquetry with which she was wont to allure and entertain them.

Part of her coquetry may have come from her position about the Court, where the beautiful Maid of Honour was the light about which a thousand beaux came and fluttered, where she was sure to have a ring of admirers round her, crowding to listen to her repartees as much as to admire her beauty ; and where she spoke and listened to much free talk, such as one never would have thought the lips or ears of Rachel Castlewood's daughter would have uttered or heard. When in waiting at Windsor or Hampton, the

Court ladies and gentlemen would be making riding parties together ; Mrs. Beatrix in a horseman's coat and hat, the foremost after the stag-hounds and over the park fences, a crowd of young fellows at her heels. If the English country ladies at this time were the most pure and modest of any ladies in the world—the English town and Court ladies permitted themselves words and behaviour that were neither modest nor pure ; and claimed, some of them, a freedom which those who love that sex most would never wish to grant them. The gentlemen of my family that follow after me (for I don't encourage the ladies to pursue any such studies) may read in the works of Mr. Congreve, and Dr. Swift, and others, what was the conversation and what the habits of our time.

The most beautiful woman in England in 1712, when Esmond returned to this country, a lady of high birth, and though of no fortune to be sure, with a thousand fascinations of wit and manners—Beatrix Esmond—was now six-and-twenty years old, and Beatrix Esmond still. Of her hundred adorers she had not chosen one for a husband ; and those who had asked had been

jilted by her ; and more still had left her. A succession of near ten years' crops of beauties had come up since her time, and had been reaped by proper *husbandmen*, if we may make an agricultural simile, and had been housed comfortably long ago. Her own contemporaries were sober mothers by this time ; girls with not a tithe of her charms, or her wit, having made good matches, and now claiming precedence over the spinster who but lately had derided and outshone them. The young beauties were beginning to look down on Beatrix as an old maid ; and sneer, and call her one of Charles II.'s ladies, and ask whether her portrait was not in the Hampton Court Gallery ? But still she reigned, at least in one man's opinion, superior over all the little misses that were the toasts of the young lads ; and in Esmond's eyes was ever perfectly lovely and young.

Who knows how many were nearly made happy by possessing her, or, rather, how many were fortunate in escaping this syren ? 'Tis a marvel to think that her mother was the purest and simplest woman in the whole world, and that this girl should have been born from her. I am

inclined to fancy, my mistress who never said a harsh word to her children (and but twice or thrice only to one person), must have been too fond and pressing with the maternal authority ; for her son and her daughter both revolted early , nor after their first flight from the nest could they ever be brought back quite to the fond mother's bosom. Lady Castlewood, and perhaps it was as well, knew little of her daughter's life and real thoughts. How was she to apprehend what passed in Queens' antechambers and at Court tables ? Mrs. Beatrix asserted her own authority so resolutely that her mother quickly gave in. The Maid of Honour had her own equipage ; went from home and came back at her own will : her mother was alike powerless to resist her or to lead her, or to command or to persuade her.

She had been engaged once, twice, thrice, to be married, Esmond believed. When he quitted home, it hath been said, she was promised to my Lord Ashburnham, and now, on his return, behold his lordship was just married to Lady Mary Butler, the Duke of Ormonde's daughter, and his fine houses, and twelve thousand a year of fortune, for which Miss Beatrix had rather coveted him,

was out of her power. To her Esmond could say nothing in regard to the breaking of this match ; and asking his mistress about it, all Lady Castlewood answered was : “ Do not speak to me about it, Harry. I cannot tell you how or why they parted, and I fear to enquire. I have told you before, that with all her kindness, and wit, and generosity, and that sort of splendour of nature she has ; I can say but little good of poor Beatrix, and look with dread at the marriage she will form. Her mind is fixed on ambition only, and making a great figure : and, this achieved, she will tire of it as she does of everything. Heaven help her husband whoever he shall be ! My Lord Ashburnham was a most excellent young man, gentle, and yet manly, of very good parts, so they told me, and as my little conversation would enable me to judge ; and a kind temper—kind and enduring I’m sure he must have been, from all that he had to endure. But he quitted her at last ; from some crowning piece of caprice or tyranny of hers ; and now he has married a young woman that will make him a thousand times happier than my poor girl ever could.”

The rupture, whatever its cause was, (I heard

the scandal, but indeed shall not take pains to repeat at length in this diary the trumpery coffee-house story,) caused a good deal of low talk; and Mr. Esmond was present at my lord's appearance at the Birthday with his bride, over whom the revenge that Beatrix took was to look so imperial and lovely that the modest downcast young lady could not appear beside her, and Lord Ashburnham, who had his reasons for wishing to avoid her, flunked away quite shamefaced, and very early. This time His Grace the Duke of Hamilton, whom Esmond had seen about her before, was constant at Miss Beatrix's side: he was one of the most splendid gentlemen of Europe, accomplished by books, by travel, by long command of the best company, distinguished as a statesman, having been ambassador in King William's time, and a noble speaker in the Scots' Parliament, where he had led the party that was against the Union, and though now five or six and forty years of age, a gentleman so high in station, accomplished in wit, and favoured in person, that he might pretend to the hand of any Princess in Europe.

“Should you like the Duke for a cousin?”

says Mr. Secretary St. John, whispering to Colonel Esmond in French : “it appears that the widower consoles himself.”

But to return to our little *Spectator* paper and the conversation which grew out of it. Miss Beatrix at first was quite *bit* (as the phrase of that day was) and did not “smoke” the authorship of the story : indeed Esmond had tried to imitate as well as he could Mr. Steele’s manner, (as for the other author of the *Spectator* his prose style I think is altogether inimitable;) and Dick, who was the idlest and best natured of men, would have let the piece pass into his journal and go to posterity as one of his own lucubrations, but that Esmond did not care to have a lady’s name whom he loved, sent forth to the world in a light so unfavourable. Beatrix pished and psha’d over the paper; Colonel Esmond watching with no little interest her countenance as she read it.

“How stupid your friend Mr. Steele becomes,” cries Miss Beatrix. “Epsom and Tunbridge! Will he never have done with Epsom and Tunbridge, and with beaux at church, and Jocastas and Lindamiras? Why does he not

call women Nelly and Betty, as their godfathers and godmothers did for them in their baptism?"

"Beatrix, Beatrix!" says her mother, "speak gravely of grave things."

"Mamma thinks the Church Catechism came from Heaven, I believe," says Beatrix, with a laugh, "and was brought down by a bishop from a mountain. O how I used to break my heart over it! Besides, I had a Popish godmother, mamma; why did you give me one?"

"I gave you the Queen's name," says her mother, blushing. "And a very pretty name it is," said somebody else.

Beatrix went on reading—"Spell my name with a y—why you wretch," says she, turning round to Colonel Esmond, "you have been telling my story to Mr. Steele—or stop—you have written the paper yourself to turn me into ridicule. For shame, sir!"

Poor Mr. Esmond felt rather frightened, and told a truth, which was nevertheless an entire falsehood. "Upon my honour," says he, "I have not even read the *Spectator* of this morning." Nor had he, for that was not the *Spectator*, but a sham newspaper put in its place.

She went on reading : her face rather flushed as she read. “No,” she says, “I think you couldn’t have written it. I think it must have been Mr. Steele when he was drunk—and afraid of his horrid vulgar wife. Whenever I see an enormous compliment to a woman, and some outrageous panegyrick about female virtue, I always feel sure that the Captain and his better half have fallen out over night, and that he has been brought home tipsy, or has been found out in——”

“Beatrix!” cries the Lady Castlewood.

“Well, mamma! Do not cry out before you are hurt. I am not going to say anything wrong. I won’t give you more annoyance than you can help, you pretty kind mamma. Yes, and your little Trix is a naughty little Trix, and she leaves undone those things which she ought to have done, and does those things which she ought not to have done, and there’s—well now—I won’t go on. Yes I will, unless you kiss me.” And with this the young lady lays aside her paper, and runs up to her mother and performs a variety of embraces with her ladyship, saying as plain as eyes could speak to

Mr. Esmond,—“ There, sir: would not *you* like to play the very same pleafant game ? ”

“ Indeed, madam, I would,” says he.

“ Would what ? ” asked Miss Beatrix.

“ What you meant when you looked at me in that provoking way,” answers Esmond.

“ What a confessor ! ” cries Beatrix, with a laugh.

“ What is it Henry would like, my dear ? ” asks her mother, the kind soul, who was always thinking what we would like, and how she could please us.

The girl runs up to her—“ O you silly kind mamma,” she says, kissing her again, “ that’s what Harry would like ; ” and she broke out into a great joyful laugh: and Lady Castlewood blushed as bashful as a maid of sixteen.

“ Look at her, Harry,” whispers Beatrix, running up, and speaking in her sweet low tones. “ Doesn’t the blush become her ? Isn’t she pretty ! She looks younger than I am, and I am sure she is a hundred million thousand times better.”

Esmond’s kind mistres left the room, carrying her blushes away with her.

“If we girls at Court could grow such roses as that,” continues Beatrix, with her laugh, “what wouldn’t we do to preserve ‘em! We’d clip their stalks and put ‘em in salt and water. But those flowers don’t bloom at Hampton Court and Windsor, Henry.” She paused for a minute, and the smile fading away from her April face, gave place to a menacing shower of tears: “O how good she is, Harry,” Beatrix went on to say. “O what a saint she is! Her goodness frightens me. I’m not fit to live with her. I should be better I think if she were not so perfect. She has had a great sorrow in her life, and a great secret; and repented of it. It could not have been my father’s death. She talks freely about that: nor could she have loved him very much —though who knows what we women do love, and why?”

“What, and why, indeed,” says Mr. Esmond.

“No one knows,” Beatrix went on, without noticing this interruption except by a look, “what my mother’s life is. She hath been at early prayer this morning: she passeth hours in her closet; if you were to follow her thither, you would find her at prayers now. She tends

the poor of the place—the horrid, dirty poor. She sits through the curate's sermons—O those dreary sermons! And you see, *on a beau dire*; but good as they are, people like her are not fit to commune with us of the world. There is always, as it were, a third person present, even when I and my mother are alone. She can't be frank with me quite; who is always thinking of the next world, and of her guardian angel, perhaps that's in company. O, Harry, I'm jealous of that guardian angel!" here broke out Mistress Beatrix. "It's horrid, I know; but my mother's life is all for Heaven, and mine—all for earth. We can never be friends quite; and then, she cares more for Frank's little finger than she does for me,—I know she does: and she loves you, sir, a great deal too much; and I hate you for it. I would have had her all to myself; but she wouldn't. In my childhood, it was my father she loved—(O, how could she? I remember him kind and handsome, but so stupid, and not being able to speak after drinking wine). And, then, it was Frank; and now, it is Heaven and the clergyman. How I would have loved her! From a child I used to be in a

rage that she loved anybody but me ; but she loved you all better—all, I know she did. And now, she talks of the blessed consolation of religion. Dear soul ! she thinks she is happier for believing, as she must, that we are all of us wicked and miserable sinners ; and this world is only a *pied à terre* for the good, where they stay for a night, as we do, coming from Walcote, at that great, dreary, uncomfortable Hounflow Inn, in those horrid beds. O, do you remember those horrid beds ?—and the chariot comes and fetches them to Heaven the next morning."

" Hush, Beatrix," says Mr. Esmond.

" Hush, indeed. You are a hypocrite, too, Henry, with your grave airs and your glum face. We are all hypocrites. O dear me ! We are all alone, alone, alone," says poor Beatrix, her fair breast heaving with a sigh.

" It was I that writ every line of that paper, my dear," says Mr. Esmond. " You are not so worldly as you think yourself, Beatrix, and better than we believe you. The good we have in us we doubt of ; and the happiness that's to our hand we throw away. You bend your ambition on a great marriage and establishment

—and why? You'll tire of them when you win them: and be no happier with a coronet on your coach—”

“ Than riding pillion with Lubin to market,” says Beatrix. “ Thank you, Lubin!”

“ I'm a dismal shepherd, to be sure,” answers Esmond, with a blush; “ and require a nymph that can tuck my bed-clothes up, and make me water-gruel. Well, Tom Lockwood can do that. He took me out of the fire upon his shoulders, and nursed me through my illness as love will scarce ever do. Only good wages, and a hope of my clothes, and the contents of my portmanteau. How long was it that Jacob served an apprenticeship for Rachel?”

“ For mamma?” says Beatrix. “ Is it mamma your honour wants, and that I should have the happiness of calling you papa?”

Esmond blushed again. I spoke of a Rachel that a shepherd courted five thousand years ago; when shepherds were longer lived than now. And my meaning was, that since I saw you first after our separation—a child you were then . . .”

“ And I put on my best stockings to captivate you, I remember, sir . . .”

“ You have had my heart ever since then, such as it was; and, such as you were, I cared for no other woman. What little reputation I have won, it was that you might be pleased with it; and, indeed, it is not much; and I think a hundred fools in the army have got and deserved quite as much. Was there something in the air of that dismal old Castlewood that made us all gloomy, and dissatisfied, and lonely under its ruined old roof? We were all so, even when together and united, as it seemed, following our separate schemes, each as we sate round the table.”

“ Dear, dreary old place!” cries Beatrix. “ Mamma hath never had the heart to go back thither since we left it, when—never mind how many years ago,” and she flung back her curls, and looked over her fair shoulder at the mirror superbly, as if she said, “ Time, I defy you.”

“ Yes,” says Esmond, who had the art, as she owned, of divining many of her thoughts. “ You can afford to look in the glass still; and only be pleased by the truth it tells you. As for me, do you know what my scheme is? I think of asking Frank to give me the Virginia

estate King Charles gave our grandfather. (She gave a superb curtsey, as much as to say, “Our grandfather, indeed! Thank you, Mr. Bastard.”) Yes, I know you are thinking of my bar-sinister, and so am I. A man cannot get over it in this country; unless, indeed, he wears it across a king’s arms, when ’tis a highly honourable coat; and I am thinking of retiring into the plantations, and building myself a wigwam in the woods, and perhaps, if I want company, suiting myself with a squaw. We will send your ladyship furs over for the winter; and when you are old, we’ll provide you with tobacco. I am not quite clever enough, or not rogue enough—I know not which—for the old world. I may make a place for myself in the new, which is not so full; and found a family there. When you are a mother yourself, and a great lady, perhaps I shall send you over from the plantation some day a little barbarian that is half Esmond half Mohock, and you will be kind to him for his father’s sake, who was, after all, your kinsman; and whom you loved a little.”

“What folly you are talking, Harry,” says Miss Beatrix, looking with her great eyes.

“ ‘Tis sober earnest,” says Esmond. And, indeed, the scheme had been dwelling a good deal in his mind for some time past, and especially since his return home, when he found how hopeless, and even degrading to himself, his passion was. “ No,” says he, then, “ I have tried half a dozen times now. I can bear being away from you well enough; but being with you is intolerable (another low curtsey on Mrs. Beatrix’s part), and I will go. I have enough to buy axes and guns for my men, and beads and blankets for the savages; and I’ll go and live amongst them.”

“ *Mon ami*,” she says, quite kindly, and taking Esmond’s hand, with an air of great compassion. “ You can’t think that in our position anything more than our present friendship is possible. You are our elder brother—as such we view you, pitying your misfortune, not rebuking you with it. Why, you are old enough and grave enough to be our father. I always thought you a hundred years old, Harry, with your solemn face and grave air. I feel as a sister to you, and can no more. Isn’t that enough, sir? ” And she put her face quite close to his—who knows with what intention?

“ It’s too much,” says Esmond, turning away. “ I can’t bear this life, and shall leave it. I shall stay, I think, to see you married, and then freight a ship, and call it the *Beatrix*, and bid you all . . .”

Here the servant, flinging the door open, announced His Grace the Duke of Hamilton, and Esmond started back with something like an imprecation on his lips, as the nobleman entered, looking splendid in his star and green riband. He gave Mr. Esmond just that gracious bow which he would have given to a lacquey who fetched him a chair or took his hat, and seated himself by Miss *Beatrix*, as the poor colonel went out of the room with a hang-dog look.

Esmond’s mistress was in the lower room as he passed down stairs. She often met him as he was coming away from *Beatrix*; and she beckoned him into the apartment.

“ Has she told you, Harry?” Lady Castlewood said.

“ She has been very frank — very,” says Esmond.

“ But—but about what is going to happen?”

“What is going to happen?” says he, his heart beating.

“His Grace the Duke of Hamilton has proposed to her,” says my lady. “He made his offer yesterday. They will marry as soon as his mourning is over; and you have heard his Grace is appointed Ambassador to Paris; and the Ambassadress goes with him.”

CHAPTER IV.



BEATRIX'S NEW SUITOR.

THE gentleman whom Beatrix had selected was, to be sure, twenty years older than the Colonel, with whom she quarrelled for being too old; but this one was but a nameless adventurer, and the other, the greatest duke in Scotland, with pretensions even to a still higher title. My Lord Duke of Hamilton had, indeed, every merit belonging to a gentleman, and he had had the time to mature his accomplishments fully, being upwards of fifty years old when Madam Beatrix selected him for a bridegroom. Duke Hamilton, then Earl of Arran, had been educated at the famous Scottish university of Glasgow, and, coming to London, became a great favourite of Charles the Second, who made him a lord of his bedchamber, and afterwards

appointed him ambassador to the French king, under whom the earl served two campaigns as his Majesty's aide-de-camp ; and he was absent on this service when King Charles died.

King James continued my lord's promotion—made him Master of the Wardrobe, and Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Horse ; and his lordship adhered firmly to King James, being of the small company that never quitted that unfortunate monarch till his departure out of England ; and then it was, in 1688, namely, that he made the friendship with Colonel Francis Esmond, that had always been, more or less, maintained in the two families.

The earl professed a great admiration for King William always, but never could give him his allegiance ; and was engaged in more than one of the plots in the late great king's reign, which always ended in the plotter's discomfiture, and generally in their pardon, by the magnanimity of the King. Lord Arran was twice prisoner in the Tower during this reign, undauntedly saying, when offered his release, upon parole not to engage against King William, that he would not give his word,

because “he was sure he could not keep it;” but, nevertheless, he was both times discharged without any trial; and the King bore this noble enemy so little malice, that when his mother, the Duchess of Hamilton, of her own right, resigned her claim on her husband’s death, the earl was, by patent signed at Loo, 1690, created Duke of Hamilton, Marquis of Clydesdale, and Earl of Arran, with precedence from the original creation. His Grace took the oaths and his seat in the Scottish parliament in 1700: was famous there for his patriotism and eloquence, especially in the debates about the Union Bill, which Duke Hamilton opposed with all his strength, though he would not go the length of the Scottish gentry, who were for resisting it by force of arms. ’Twas said he withdrew his opposition all of a sudden, and in consequence of letters from the King at St. Germains, who entreated him on his allegiance not to thwart the Queen, his sister, in this measure; and the Duke, being always bent upon effecting the King’s return to his kingdom through a reconciliation between his Majesty and Queen Anne, and quite averse to his landing with

arms and French troops, held aloof, and kept out of Scotland during the time when the Chevalier de St. George's descent from Dunkirk was projected, passing his time in England in his great estate of Staffordshire.

When the Whigs went out of office in 1710, the Queen began to show his Grace the very greatest marks of her favour. He was created Duke of Brandon and Baron of Dutton in England ; having the Thistle already originally bestowed on him by King James the Second, his Grace was now promoted to the honour of the Garter—a distinction so great and illustrious that no subject hath ever bourne them hitherto together. When this objection was made to her Majesty, she was pleased to say, “Such a subject as the Duke of Hamilton has a pre-eminent claim to every mark of distinction which a crowned head can confer. I will henceforth wear both orders myself.”

At the Chapter held at Windsor in October, 1712, the Duke and other knights, including Lord Treasurer, the new-created Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, were installed ; and a few days afterwards his Grace was appointed Ambassador-

Extraordinary to France, and his equipages, plate, and liveries commanded, of the most sumptuous kind, not only for his Excellency the Ambassador, but for her Excellency the Ambassadress, who was to accompany him. Her arms were already quartered on the coach pannels, and her brother was to hasten over on the appointed day to give her away.

His lordship was a widower, having married, in 1698, Elizabeth daughter of Digby Lord Gerrard, by which marriage great estates came into the Hamilton family; and out of these estates came, in part, that tragick quarrel which ended the Duke's career.

From the losf of a tooth to that of a mistref^s there's no pang that is not bearable. The apprehension is much more cruel than the certainty; and we make up our mind to the misfortune when 'tis irremediable, part with the tormentor, and mumble our crust on t'other side of the jaws. I think Colonel Esmond was relieved when a ducal coach-and-six came and whisked his charmer away out of his reach, and placed her in a higher sphere. As you have

seen the nymph in the opera-machine go up to the clouds at the end of the piece where Mars Bacchus, Apollo, and all the divine company of Olympians are seated, and quaver out her last song as a goddes: so when this portentous elevation was accomplished in the Esmond family, I am not sure that every one of us did not treat the divine Beatrix with special honours; at least, the saucy little beauty carried her head with a toss of supreme authority, and assumed a touch-me-not air, which all her friends very good-humouredly bowed to.

An old army acquaintance of Colonel Esmond's, honest Tom Trett, who had sold his company, married a wife, and turned merchant in the city, was dreadfully gloomy for a long time, though living in a fine house on the river, and carrying on a great trade to all appearance. At length Esmond saw his friend's name in the Gazette as a bankrupt; and a week after this circumstance my bankrupt walks into Mr. Esmond's lodging with a face perfectly radiant with good-humour, and as jolly and careless as when they had failed from Southampton ten years before for Vigo. "This bankruptcy,"

says Tom, “has been hanging over my head these three years; the thought hath prevented my sleeping, and I have looked at poor Polly’s head on t’other pillow, and then towards my razor on the table, and thought to put an end to myself, and so give my woes the slip. But now we are bankrupts: Tom Trett pays as many shillings in the pound as he can: his wife has a little cottage at Fulham, and her fortune secured to herself. I am afraid neither of bailiff nor of creditor; and for the last six nights have slept easy.” So it was that when Fortune shook her wings and left him, honest Tom cuddled himself up in his ragged virtue, and fell asleep.

Esmond did not tell his friend how much his story applied to Esmond too: but he laughed at it, and used it; and having fairly struck his docket in this love transaction, determined to put a cheerful face on his bankruptcy. Perhaps Beatrix was a little offended at his gaiety. “Is this the way, sir, that you receive the announcement of your misfortune,” says she, “and do you come smiling before me as if you were glad to be rid of me?”

Esmond would not be put off from his good-

humour, but told her the story of Tom Trett and his bankruptcy. “I have been hankering after the grapes on the wall,” says he, “and lost my temper because they were beyond my reach ; was there any wonder ? They’re gone now and another has them—a taller man than your humble servant has won them.” And the Colonel made his cousin a low bow.

“A taller man, cousin Esmond !” says she. “A man of spirit would have scaled the wall, sir, and seized them ! A man of courage would have fought for ‘em, not gaped for ‘em.”

“A Duke has but to gape and they drop into his mouth,” says Esmond, with another low bow.

“Yes, sir,” says she, “a Duke *is* a taller man than you. And why should I not be grateful to one such as his Grace, who gives me his heart and his great name ? It is a great gift he honours me with ; I know ‘tis a bargain between us ; and I accept it, and will do my utmost to perform my part of it. ’Tis no question of fighing and philandering between a nobleman of his Grace’s age and a girl who hath little of that softness in her nature. Why should I not own that I am ambitious, Harry Esmond ; and if it

be no sin in a man to covet honour, why should a woman too not desire it? Shall I be frank with you, Harry, and say that if you had not been down on your knees, and so humble, you might have fared better with me? A woman of my spirit, cousin, is to be won by gallantry, and not by sighs and rueful faces. All the time you are worshipping and singing hymns to me, I know very well I am no goddess, and grow weary of the incense. So would you have been weary of the goddess too—when she was called Mrs. Esmond, and got out of humour because she had not pin-money enough, and was forced to go about in an old gown. Eh! cousin, a goddess in a mob-cap, that has to make her husband's gruel, ceases to be divine,—I am sure of it. I should have been sulky and scolded; and of all the proud wretches in the world Mr. Esmond is the proudest, let me tell him that. You never fall into a passion: but you never forgive, I think. Had you been a great man, you might have been good-humoured; but being nobody, sir, you are too great a man for me; and I'm afraid of you, cousin—there; and I won't worship you, and you'll never be happy except

with a woman who will. Why, after I belonged to you, and after one of my tantrums, you would have put the pillow over my head some night, and smothered me, as the black man does the woman in the play that you're so fond of. What's the creature's name?—Desdemona. You would, you little black-eyed Othello!"

"I think I should, Beatrix," says the Colonel.

"And I want no such ending. I intend to live to be a hundred, and to go to ten thousand routs and balls, and to play cards every night of my life till the year eighteen-hundred. And I like to be the first of my company, sir; and I like flattery and compliments, and you give me none; and I like to be made to laugh, sir, and who's to laugh at *your* dismal face I should like to know; and I like a coach-and-six or a coach-and-eight; and I like diamonds and a new gown every week; and people to say—'That's the Duchess—How well her Grace looks—Make way for Madame l'Ambassadrice d'Angleterre—Call her Excellency's people'—that's what I like. And as for you, you want a woman to bring your slippers and cap, and to sit at your feet, and cry, 'O caro! O bravo!' whilst you

read your Shakspeares, and Miltos, and stuff. Mamma would have been the wife for you, had you been a little older, though you look ten years older than she does—you do, you glum-faced, blue-bearded, little old man! You might have sat, like Darby and Joan, and flattered each other; and billed and cooed like a pair of old pigeons on a perch. I want my wings and to use them, sir.” And she spread out her beautiful arms, as if indeed she could fly off like the pretty “Gawrie,” whom the man in the story was enamoured of.

“ And what will your Peter Wilkins say to your flight ? ” says Esmond, who never admired this fair creature more than when she rebelled and laughed at him.

“ A Duchess knows her place,” says she, with a laugh. “ Why, I have a son already made for me, and thirty years old (my Lord Arran), and four daughters. How they will scold, and what a rage they will be in, when I come to take the head of the table ! But I give them only a month to be angry ; at the end of that time they shall love me every one, and so shall Lord Arran, and so shall all his Grace’s Scots vassals

and followers in the Highlands. I'm bent on it ; and when I take a thing in my head, 'tis done. His Grace is the greatest gentleman in Europe, and I'll try and make him happy ; and when the King comes back, you may count on my protection, Cousin Esmond—for come back the King will and shall : and I'll bring him back from Versailles, if he comes under my hoop."

"I hope the world will make you happy, Beatrix," says Esmond, with a sigh. "You'll be Beatrix till you are my Lady Duchefs—will you not ? I shall then make your Grace my very lowest bow."

"None of these sighs and this satire, cousin," she says. "I take his Grace's great bounty thankfully—yes, thankfully ; and will wear his honours becomingly. I do not say he hath touched my heart ; but he has my gratitude, obedience, admiration—I have told him that, and no more ; and with that his noble heart is content. I have told him all—even the story of that poor creature that I was engaged to—and that I could not love ; and I gladly gave his word back to him, and jumped for joy to get back my own. I am twenty-five years old."

“Twenty-six, my dear,” says Esmond.

“Twenty-five, sir—I choose to be twenty-five; and in eight years, no man hath ever touched my heart. Yes—you did once, for a little, Harry, when you came back, after Lille, and engaging with that murderer, Mohun, and saving Frank’s life. I thought I could like you; and mamma begged me hard, on her knees, and I did,—for a day. But the old chill came over me, Henry, and the old fear of you and your melancholy; and I was glad when you went away, and engaged with my Lord Ashburnham, that I might hear no more of you, that’s the truth. You are too good for me somehow. I could not make you happy, and should break my heart in trying, and not being able to love you. But if you had asked me when we gave you the sword, you might have had me, sir, and we both should have been miserable by this time. I talked with that silly lord all night just to vex you and mamma, and I succeeded, didn’t I? How frankly we can talk of these things! It seems a thousand years ago: and though we are here sitting in the same room, there’s a great wall between us. My dear, kind,

faithful, gloomy old cousin! I can like you now, and admire you too, sir, and say that you are brave and very kind, and very true, and a fine gentleman for all—for all your little mishap at your birth,” says she, wagging her arch head.

“ And now, sir,” says she, with a curtsey, “ we must have no more talk except when mamma is by, as his Grace is with us ; for he does not half like you, cousin, and is as jealous as the blank man in your favourite play.”

Though the very kindness of the words stabbed Mr. Esmond with the keenest pang, he did not show his sense of the wound by any look of his (as Beatrix, indeed, afterwards owned to him), but said, with a perfect command of himself and an easy smile, “ The interview must not end yet, my dear, until I have had my last word. Stay, here comes your mother (indeed she came in here with her sweet anxious face, and Esmond, going up, kissed her hand respectfully). My dear lady may hear, too, the last words, which are no secrets, and are only a parting benediction accompanying a present for your marriage from an old gentleman your guardian ; for I feel as if I was the guardian of all the family, and an old

old fellow that is fit to be the grandfather of you all ; and in this character let me make my Lady Duchess her wedding present. They are the diamonds my father's widow left me. I had thought Beatrix might have had them a year ago ; but they are good enough for a duchess, though not bright enough for the handsomest woman in the world." And he took the case out of his pocket in which the jewels were, and presented them to his cousin.

She gave a cry of delight, for the stones were indeed very handsome, and of great value ; and the next minute the necklace was where Belinda's cross is in Mr. Pope's admirable poem, and glittering on the whitest and most perfectly-shaped neck in all England.

The girl's delight at receiving these trinkets was so great, that after rushing to the looking-glass and examining the effect they produced upon that fair neck which they surrounded, Beatrix was running back with her arms extended, and was perhaps for paying her cousin with a price, that he would have liked no doubt to receive from those beautiful rosy lips of hers ; but at this moment the door

opened, and his Grace the bridegroom elect was announced.

He looked very black upon Mr. Esmond, to whom he made a very low bow indeed, and kissed the hand of each lady in his most ceremonious manner. He had come in his chair from the palace hard by, and wore his two stars of the Garter and the Thistle.

“Look, my Lord Duke,” says Mrs. Beatrix, advancing to him, and showing the diamonds on her breast.

“Diamonds,” says his Grace. “Hm! they seem pretty.”

“They are a present on my marriage,” says Beatrix.

“From her Majesty?” asks the Duke. “The Queen is very good.”

“From my cousin Henry—from our cousin Henry”—cry both the ladies in a breath.

“I have not the honour of knowing the gentleman. I thought that my Lord Castlewood had no brother: and that on your ladyship’s side there were no nephews.”

“From our cousin, Colonel Henry Esmond, my lord,” says Beatrix, taking the Colonel’s hand

very bravely—“ who was left guardian to us by our father, and who hath a hundred times shown his love and friendship for our family.”

“ The Duchess of Hamilton receives no diamonds but from her husband, madam,” says the Duke—“ may I pray you to restore these to Mr. Esmond ? ”

“ Beatrix Esmond may receive a present from our kinsman and benefactor, my Lord Duke,” says Lady Castlewood, with an air of great dignity. “ She is my daughter yet : and if her mother sanctions the gift—no one else hath the right to question it.”

“ Kinsman and benefactor ! ” says the Duke. “ I know of no kinsman : and I do not chuse that my wife should have for a benefactor a—”

“ My lord,” says Colonel Esmond.

“ I am not here to bandy words,” says his Grace : “ frankly I tell you that your visits to this house are too frequent, and that I chuse no presents for the Duchess of Hamilton from gentlemen that bear a name they have no right to.”

“ My lord ! ” breaks out Lady Castlewood, “ Mr. Esmond hath the best right to that name

of any man in the world : and 'tis as old and as honourable as your Grace's."

My Lord Duke smiled, and looked as if Lady Castlewood was mad, that was so talking to him.

" If I called him benefactor," said my mistress, " it is because he has been so to us—yes, the noblest, the truest, the bravest, the dearest of benefactors. He would have saved my husband's life from Mohun's sword. He did save my boy's, and defended him from that villain. Are those no benefits ? "

" I ask Colonel Esmond's pardon," says his Grace, if possible more haughty than before ; " I would say not a word that should give him offence, and thank him for his kindness to your ladyship's family. My Lord Mohun and I are connected, you know, by marriage—though neither by blood nor friendship : but I must repeat what I said, that my wife can receive no presents from Colonel Esmond."

" My daughter may receive presents from the Head of our House : my daughter may thankfully take kindness from her father's, her mother's, her brother's dearest friend ; and be grateful for one more benefit besides the thousand we owe

him," cries Lady Esmond. "What is a string of diamond stones compared to that affection he hath given us—our dearest preserver and benefactor? We owe him not only Frank's life, but our all—yes, our all," says my mistress, with a heightened colour and a trembling voice. "The title we bear is his, if he would claim it. 'Tis we who have no right to our name: not he that's too great for it. He sacrificed his name at my dying lord's bedside—sacrificed it to my orphan children; gave up rank and honour because he loved us so nobly. His father was Viscount of Castlewood and Marquis of Esmond before him; and he is his father's lawful son and true heir, and we are the recipients of his bounty, and he the chief of a house that's as old as your own. And if he is content to forego his name that my child may bear it, we love him and honour him, and bless him under whatever name he bears"—and here the fond and affectionate creature would have knelt to Esmond again, but that he prevented her; and Beatrix running up to her with a pale face and a cry of alarm, embraced her and said, "Mother, what is this?"

"'Tis a family secret, my Lord Duke," says

Colonel Esmond : “ poor Beatrix knew nothing of it: nor did my lady till a year ago. And I have as good a right to resign my title as your Grace’s mother to abdicate hers to you.”

“ I should have told everything to the Duke of Hamilton,” said my mistress, “ had his Grace applied to me for my daughter’s hand and not to Beatrix. I should have spoken with you this very day in private, my lord, had not your words brought about this sudden explanation—and now ‘tis fit Beatrix should hear it ; and know, as I would have all the world know, what we owe to our kinsman and patron.”

And then, in her touching way, and having hold of her daughter’s hand, and speaking to her rather than my Lord Duke, Lady Castlewood told the story which you know already,—lauding up to the skies her kinsman’s behaviour. On his side Mr. Esmond explained the reasons that seemed quite sufficiently cogent with him, why the succession in the family, as at present it stood, should not be disturbed ; and he should remain, as he was, Colonel Esmond.

“ And Marquis of Esmond, my lord,” says his Grace, with a low bow. “ Permit me to ask

your lordship's pardon for words that were uttered in ignorance ; and to beg for the favour of your friendship. To be allied to you, sir, must be an honour under whatever name you are known (so his Grace was pleased to say) : and in return for the splendid present you make my wife, your kinswoman, I hope you will please to command any service that James Douglas can perform. I shall never be easy until I repay you a part of my obligations at least ; and ere very long, and with the mission her Majesty hath given me," says the Duke, " that may perhaps be in my power. I shall esteem it as a favour, my lord, if Colonel Esmond will give away the bride."

" And if he will take the usual payment in advance, he is welcome," says Beatrix, stepping up to him ; and as Esmond kissed her, she whispered, " O, why didn't I know you before?"

My Lord Duke was as hot as a flame at this salute, but said never a word : Beatrix made him a proud curtsey, and the two ladies quitted the room together.

" When does your Excellency go for Paris ? " asks Colonel Esmond.

" As soon after the ceremony as may be," his

Grace answered. “ ’Tis fixed for the first of December: it cannot be sooner. The equipage will not be ready till then. The Queen intends the embassy should be very grand—and I have law business to settle. That ill-omened Mohun has come, or is coming, to London again: we are in a lawsuit about my late Lord Gerard’s property ; and he hath sent to me to meet him.”

CHAPTER V.

MOHUN APPEARS FOR THE LAST TIME IN THIS HISTORY.

BESIDES my Lord Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, who, for family reasons, had kindly promised his protection and patronage to Colonel Esmond, he had other great friends in power now, both able and willing to assist him, and he might, with such allies, look forward to as fortunate advancement in civil life at home as he had got rapid promotion abroad. His Grace was magnanimous enough to offer to take Mr. Esmond as secretary on his Paris embassy, but no doubt he intended that proposal should be rejected; at any rate, Esmond could not bear the thoughts of attending his mistress farther than the church-door after her marriage, and so declined that offer which his generous rival made him.

Other gentlemen in power, were liberal at least

of compliments and promises to Colonel Esmond. Mr. Harley, now become my Lord Oxford and Mortimer, and installed Knight of the Garter on the same day as his Grace of Hamilton had received the same honor, sent to the Colonel to say that a seat in Parliament should be at his disposal presently, and Mr. St. John held out many flattering hopes of advancement to the Colonel when he should enter the House. Esmond's friends were all successful, and the most successful and triumphant of all was his dear old commander, General Webb, who was now appointed Lieutenant-General of the Land Forces, and received with particular honor by the ministry, by the Queen, and the people out of doors, who huzza'd the brave chief when they used to see him in his chariot, going to the House or to the Drawing Room, or hobbling on foot to his coach from St. Stephen's upon his glorious old crutch and stick, and cheered him as loud as they had ever done Marlborough.

That great Duke was utterly disgraced ; and honest old Webb dated all his Grace's misfortunes from Wynendael, and vowed that fate served the traitor right. Duchefs Sarah had also gone to

ruin ; she had been forced to give up her keys, and her places, and her pensions :—“ Ah, ah ! ” says Webb, “ she would have locked up three millions of French crowns with her keys, had I but been knocked on the head, but I stopped that convoy at Wynendael.” Our enemy Cardonnel was turned out of the House of Commons (along with Mr. Walpole) for malversation of publick money. Cadogan lost his place of Lieutenant of the Tower. Marlborough’s daughters resigned their posts of ladies of the bed-chamber, and so complete was the Duke’s disgrace, that his son-in-law, Lord Bridgewater, was absolutely obliged to give up his lodging at St. James’s, and had his half-pension, as Master of the Horse, taken away. But I think the lowest depth of Marlborough’s fall was when he humbly sent to ask General Webb, when he might wait upon him ; he who had commanded the stout old General, who had injured him and sneered at him, who had kept him dangling in his ante-chamber, who could not even after his great service condescend to write him a letter in his own hand. The nation was as eager for peace, as ever it had been hot for war. The Prince of Savoy came amongst

us, had his audience of the Queen, and got his famous Sword of Honour, and strove with all his force to form a Whig party together, to bring over the young Prince of Hanover—to do any thing which might prolong the war, and consummate the ruin of the old sovereign whom he hated so implacably. But the nation was tired of the struggle; so completely wearied of it that not even our defeat at Denain could rouse us into any anger, though such an action so lost two years before, would have set all England in a fury. 'Twas easy to see that the great Marlborough was not with the army. Eugene was obliged to fall back in a rage, and forego the dazzling revenge of his life. 'Twas in vain the Duke's side asked: “Would we suffer our arms to be insulted? Would we not send back the only champion who could repair our honour?” The nation had had its bellyful of fighting; nor could taunts or outcries goad up our Britons any more.

For a statesman, that was always prating of liberty, and had the grandest philosophick maxims in his mouth, it must be owned that Mr. St. John sometimes rather acted like a Turkish than a

Greek philosopher, and especially fell foul of one unfortunate set of men, the men of letters, with a tyranny a little extraordinary in a man who professed to respect their calling so much. The literary controversy at this time was very bitter, the government side was the winning one, the popular one, and I think might have been the merciful one. 'Twas natural that the opposition should be peevish and cry out; some men did so from their hearts, admiring the Duke of Marlborough's prodigious talents and deplored the disgrace of the greatest general the world ever knew; 'twas the stomach that caused other patriots to grumble, and such men cried out because they were poor, and paid to do so. Against these my Lord Bolingbroke never showed the slightest mercy, whipping a dozen into prison or into the pillory without the least commisera-tion.

From having been a man of arms, Mr. Esmond had now come to be a man of letters, but on a safer side than that in which the above-cited poor fellows ventured their liberties and ears. There was no danger on ours which was the winning side; besides Mr. Esmond pleased

himself by thinking that he writ like a gentleman if he did not always succeed as a wit.

Of the famous wits of that age, who have rendered Queen Anne's reign illustrious, and whose works will be in all Englishmen's hands in ages yet to come, Mr. Esmond saw many, but at publick places chiefly; never having a great intimacy with any of them except with honest Dick Steele and Mr. Addison, who parted company with Esmond, however, when that gentleman became a declared Tory and lived on close terms with the leading persons of that party. Addison kept himself to a few friends, and very rarely opened himself except in their company. A man more upright and conscientious than he, it was not possible to find in publick life, and one whose conversation was so various, easy, and delightful. Writing now in my mature years, I own that I think Addison's politicks were the right, and were my time to come over again I would be a Whig in England, and not a Tory; but with people that take a side in politicks, 'tis men rather than principles that commonly bind them. A kindness or a flight puts a man under one flag or the other, and he marches

with it to the end of the campaign. Esmond's master in war was injured by Marlborough, and hated him ; and the lieutenant fought the quarrels of his leader. Webb coming to London was used as a weapon by Marlborough's enemies (and true steel he was, that honest chief); nor was his aide-de-camp, Mr. Esmond, an unfaithful or unworthy partisan. 'Tis strange here, and on a foreign soil, and in a land that is independent in all but the name (for that the North American colonies shall remain dependents on yonder little island for twenty years more, I never can think), to remember how the nation at home seemed to give itself up to the domination of one or other aristocratick party, and took a Hanoverian king, or a French one, according as either prevailed. And while the Tories, the October Club gentlemen, the High Church parsons that held by the Church of England, were for having a Papist king, for whom many of their Scottish and English leaders, firm churchmen all, laid down their lives with admirable loyalty and devotion ; they were governed by men who had notoriously no religion at all, but used it as they would use any opinion for the purpose of forwarding their

own ambition. The Whigs, on the other hand, who professed attachment to religion and liberty too, were compelled to send to Holland or Hanover for a monarch around whom they could rally. A strange series of compromises is that English history ; compromise of principle, compromise of party, compromise of worship ! The lovers of English freedom and independence submitted their religious consciences to an Act of Parliament ; could not consolidate their liberty without sending to Zell or the Hague for a king to live under ; and could not find amongst the proudest people in the world a man speaking their own language, and understanding their laws, to govern them. The Tory and High Church patriots were ready to die in defence of a Papist family that had sold us to France : the great Whig nobles, the sturdy Republican recusants, who had cut off Charles Stuart's head for treason, were fain to accept a king, whose title came to him through a royal grandmother, whose own royal grandmother's head had fallen under Queen Bess's hatchet. And our proud English nobles sent to a petty German town for a monarch to come and reign in London ; and

our prelates kissed the ugly hands of his Dutch mistresses, and thought it no dishonour. In England you can but belong to one party or t'other, and you take the house you live in with all its encumbrances, its retainers, its antique discomorts, and ruins even ; you patch up, but you never build up anew. Will we of the new world submit much longer, even nominally, to this antient British superstition ? There are signs of the times which make me think that ere long we shall care as little about King George here, and peers temporal and peers spiritual, as we do for King Canute or the Druids.

This chapter began about the wits, my grandson may say, and hath wandered very far from their company. The pleasantest of the wits I knew were the Doctors Garth and Arbuthnot, and Mr. Gay, the author of “*Trivia*,” the most charming kind soul that ever laughed at a joke or cracked a bottle. Mr. Prior I saw, and he was the earthen pot swimming with the pots of brass down the stream, and always and justly frightened lest he should break in the voyage. I met him both at London and Paris, where he was performing piteous congees to the Duke of

Shrewsbury, not having courage to support the dignity which his undeniable genius and talent had won him, and writing coaxing letters to Secretary St. John, and thinking about his place and his place, and what on earth should become of him, should his party go out. The famous Mr. Congreve I saw a dozen of times at Button's, a splendid wreck of a man, magnificently attired, and though gouty, and almost blind, bearing a brave face against fortune.

The great Mr. Pope (of whose prodigious genius I have no words to express my admiration), was quite a puny lad at this time, appearing seldom in publick places. There were hundreds of men, wits, and pretty fellows frequenting the theatres and coffee-houses of that day—whom “*nunc prescribere longum est.*” Indeed I think the most brilliant of that sort I ever saw was not till fifteen years afterwards, when I paid my last visit in England, and met young Harry Fielding, son of the Fielding that served in Spain and afterwards in Flanders with us, and who for fun and humour seemed to top them all. As for the famous Dr. Swift, I can say of him, “*vidi tantum.*” He was in London all these years up

to the death of the Queen ; and in a hundred publick places, where I saw him, but no more ; he never missed Court of a Sunday, where once or twice he was pointed out to your grandfather. He would have sought me out eagerly enough had I been a great man with a title to my name, or a star on my coat. At Court the Doctor had no eyes but for the very greatest. Lord Treasurer and St. John used to call him Jonathan, and they paid him with this cheap coin for the service they took of him. He writ their lampoons, fought their enemies, flogged and bullied in their service, and it must be owned with a consummate skill and fiercenes. 'Tis said he hath lost his intellect now, and forgotten his wrongs and his rage against mankind. I have always thought of him and of Marlborough as the two greatest men of that age. I have read his books, (who doth not know them ?) here in our calm woods, and imagine a giant to myself as I think of him, a lonely fallen Prometheus, groaning as the vulture tears him. Prometheus I saw, but when first I ever had any words with him, the giant stepped out of a sedan chair in the Poultry, whither he had come with a tipsy Irish servant

parading before him, who announced him, bawling out his Reverence's name, whilst his master below was as yet haggling with the chairman. I disliked this Mr. Swift, and heard many a story about him, of his conduct to men, and his words to women. He could flatter the great as much as he could bully the weak, and Mr. Esmond being younger and hotter in that day than now, was determined should he ever meet this dragon not to run away from his teeth and his fire.

Men have all sorts of motives which carry them onwards in life, and are driven into acts of desperation, or it may be of distinction, from a hundred different causes. There was one comrade of Esmond's, an honest little Irish lieutenant of Handyside's, who owed so much money to a camp fiddler, that he began to make love to the man's daughter, intending to pay his debt that way ; and at the battle of Malplaquet, flying away from the debt and lady too, he rushed so desperately on the French lines, that he got his company ; and came a captain out of the action, and had to marry the fiddler's daughter after all, who brought him his cancelled debt to her father as poor Roger's fortune. To

run out of the reach of bill and marriage, he ran on the enemy's pikes ; and as these did not kill him he was thrown back upon t'other horn of his dilemma. Our great Duke at the same battle was fighting, not the French, but the Tories in England : and risking his life and the army's, not for his country but for his pay and places ; and for fear of his wife at home, that only being in life whom he dreaded. I have asked about men in my own company (new drafts of poor country boys were perpetually coming over to us during the wars, and brought from the ploughshare to the sword), and found that a half of them under the flags were driven thither on account of a woman : one fellow was jilted by his mistres and took the shilling in despair ; another jilted the girl, and fled from her and the parish to the tents where the law could not disturb him. Why go on particularising ? What can the sons of Adam and Eve expect, but to continue in that course of love and trouble their father and mother set out on : O my grandson ! I am drawing nigh to the end of that period of my history, when I was acquainted with the great world of England and

Europe ; my years are past the Hebrew poet's limit, and I say unto thee, all my troubles and joys too for that matter, have come from a woman ; as thine will when thy destined course begins. 'Twas a woman that made a soldier of me, that set me intriguing afterwards ; I believe I would have spun smocks for her had she so bidden me ; what strength I had in my head I would have given her ; hath not every man in his degree had his Omphale and Dalilah ? Mine befooled me on the banks of the Thames, and in dear old England ; thou mayest find thine own by Rappahannoc.

To please that woman then I tried to distinguish myself as a soldier, and afterwards as a wit and a politician ; as to please another I would have put on a black cassock and a pair of bands, and had done so but that a superior fate intervened to defeat that project. And I say, I think the world is like Captain Esmond's company I spoke of anon ; and, could you see every man's career in life, you would find a woman clogging him ; or clinging round his march and stopping him ; or cheering him and goading him ; or beckoning him out of her chariot, so that

he goes up to her, and leaves the race to be run without him ; or bringing him the apple and saying “ Eat : ” or fetching him the daggers and whispering “ Kill ! yonder lies Duncan, and a crown, and an opportunity.”

Your grandfather fought with more effect as a politician than as a wit ; and having private animosities and grievances of his own and his General’s against the Great Duke in command of the army, and more information on military matters than most writers, who had never seen beyond the fire of a tobacco-pipe at Wills’s ; he was enabled to do good service for that cause which he embarked in, and for Mr. St. John and his party. But he disdained the abuse in which some of the Tory writers indulged ; for instance Dr. Swift, who actually chose to doubt the Duke of Marlborough’s courage, and was pleased to hint that his Grace’s military capacity was doubtful : nor were Esmond’s performances worse for the effect they were intended to produce (though no doubt they could not injure the Duke of Marlborough nearly so much in the publick eyes as the malignant attacks of Swift did, which were carefully directed so as to blacken

and degrade him), because they were writ openly and fairly by Mr. Esmond, who made no disguise of them, who was now out of the army, and who never attacked the prodigious courage and talents, only the selfishness and rapacity of the chief.

The Colonel then, having writ a paper for one of the Tory journals, called the “Post-Boy,” (a letter upon Bouchain, that the town talked about for two whole days, when the appearance of an Italian singer supplied a fresh subject for conversation,) and having business at the Exchange where Mrs. Beatrix wanted a pair of gloves or a fan very likely; Esmond went to correct his paper, and was sitting at the printer’s, when the famous Doctor Swift came in, his Irish fellow with him that used to walk before his chair, and bawled out his master’s name with great dignity.

Mr. Esmond was waiting for the printer too, whose wife had gone to the tavern to fetch him, and was meantime engaged in drawing a picture of a soldier on horseback for a dirty little pretty boy of the printer’s wife, whom she had left behind her.

“I presume you are the editor of the ‘Post-

Boy,' sir?" says the Doctor, in a grating voice that had an Irish twang; and he looked at the Colonel from under his two bushy eyebrows with a pair of very clear blue eyes. His complexion was muddy, his figure rather fat, his chin double. He wore a shabby cassock, and a shabby hat over his black wig, and he pulled out a great gold watch, at which he looks very fierce.

"I am but a contributor, Doctor Swift," says Esmond, with the little boy still on his knee. He was sitting with his back in the window, so that the Doctor could not see him.

"Who told you I was Doctor Swift?" says the Doctor, eyeing the other very haughtily.

"Your Reverence's valet bawled out your name," says the Colonel. "I should judge you brought him from Ireland."

"And pray, sir, what right have you to judge whether my servant came from Ireland or no? I want to speak with your employer, Mr. Leach. I'll thank ye go fetch him."

"Where's your papa, Tommy?" asks the Colonel of the child, a smutty little wretch in a frock.

Instead of answering, the child begins to cry;

the Doctor's appearance had no doubt frightened the poor little imp.

“Send that squalling little brat about his business, and do what I bid ye, sir,” says the Doctor.

“I must finish the picture first for Tommy,” says the Colonel laughing. “Here, Tommy, will you have your Pandour with whiskers or without?”

“Whiskers,” says Tommy, quite intent on the picture.

“Who the devil are ye, sir?” cries the Doctor; “are ye a printer's man or are ye not?”—he pronounced it like *naught*.

“Your Reverence needn't raise the devil to ask who I am,” says Colonel Esmond. “Did you ever hear of Doctor Faustus, little Tommy? or Friar Bacon, who invented gunpowder, and set the Thames on fire?”

Mr. Swift turned quite red, almost purple. “I did not intend any offence, sir,” says he.

“I daresay, sir, you offended without meaning,” says the other, drily.

“Who are ye, sir? Do you know who I am, sir? You are one of the pack of Grub

Street scribblers that my friend Mr. Secretary hath laid by the heels. How dare ye, sir, speak to me in this tone?" cries the Doctor in a great fume.

"I beg your Honour's humble pardon if I have offended your honour," says Esmond in a tone of great humility. "Rather than be sent to the Compter, or be put in the pillory, there's nothing I wouldn't do. But, Mrs. Leach, the printer's lady, told me to mind Tommy whilst she went for her husband to the tavern, and I daren't leave the child lest he should fall into the fire; but if your Reverence will hold him—"

"I take the little beast!" says the Doctor, starting back. "I am engaged to your betters, fellow. Tell Mr. Leach that when he makes an appointment with Doctor Swift he had best keep it, do ye hear? And keep a respectful tongue in your head, sir, when you address a person like me."

"I'm but a poor broken-down soldier," says the Colonel, "and I've seen better days, though I am forced now to turn my hand to writing. We can't help our fate, sir."

"You're the person that Mr. Leach hath

spoken to me of, I presume. Have the goodness to speak civilly when you are spoken to ;— and tell Leach to call at my lodgings in Bury Street, and bring the papers with him to-night at ten o'clock. And the next time you see me, you'll know me, and be civil, Mr. Kemp."

Poor Kemp, who had been a lieutenant at the beginning of the war, and fallen into misfortune, was the writer of the "Post-Boy," and now took honest Mr. Leach's pay in place of her Majesty's. Esmond had seen this gentleman, and a very ingenious, hard-working, honest fellow he was, toiling to give bread to a great family, and watching up many a long winter night to keep the wolf from his door. And Mr. St. John, who had liberty always on his tongue, had just sent a dozen of the opposition writers into prison, and one actually into the pillory, for what he called libels, but libels not half so violent as those writ on our side. With regard to this very piece of tyranny, Esmond had remonstrated strongly with the Secretary, who laughed and said, the rascals were served quite right ; and told Esmond a joke of Swift's regarding the matter. Nay, more, this Irishman, when St. John was about to

pardon a poor wretch condemned to death for rape, absolutely prevented the Secretary from exercising this act of good-nature, and boasted that he had had the man hanged ; and great as the Doctor's genius might be, and splendid his ability, Esmond for one would affect no love for him, and never desired to make his acquaintance. The Doctor was at Court every Sunday assiduously enough, a place the Colonel frequented but rarely, though he had a great inducement to go there in the person of a fair Maid of Honour of her Majesty's ; and the airs of patronage Mr. Swift gave himself, forgetting gentlemen of his country whom he knew perfectly, his loud talk at once insolent and servile, nay, perhaps his very intimacy with Lord Treasurer and the Secretary, who indulged all his freaks and called him Jonathan, you may be sure were remarked by many a person of whom the proud priest himself took no note, during that time of his vanity and triumph.

'Twas but three days after the 15th of November, 1712, (Esmond minds him well of the date,) that he went by invitation to dine with his General, the foot of whose table he used to

take on these festive occasions, as he had done at many a board hard and plentiful during the campaign. This was a great feast, and of the latter sort; the honest old gentleman loved to treat his friends splendidly: his Grace of Ormonde before he joined his army as generalissimo, my Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, one of her Majesty's Secretaries of State, my Lord Orkney that had served with us abroad, being of the party. His Grace of Hamilton, Master of the Ordnance, and in whose honor the feast had been given, upon his approaching departure as Ambassador to Paris, had sent an excuse to General Webb, at two o'clock, but an hour before the dinner: nothing but the most immediate business, his Grace said, should have prevented him having the pleasure of drinking a parting glass to the health of General Webb. His absence disappointed Esmond's old chief, who suffered much from his wounds besides; and though the company was grand, it was rather gloomy. St. John came last, and brought a friend with him:—"I'm sure," says my General, bowing very politely, "my table hath always a place for Dr. Swift."

Mr. Esmond went up to the Doctor with a bow and a smile ;—“ I gave Dr. Swift’s message,” says he, “ to the printer : I hope he brought your pamphlet to your lodgings in time.” Indeed poor Leach had come to his house very soon after the Doctor left it, being brought away rather tipsy from the tavern by his thrifty wife ; and he talked of Cousin Swift in a maudlin way, though of course Mr. Esmond did not allude to this relationship. The Doctor scowled, blushed, and was much confused, and said scarce a word during the whole of dinner. A very little stone will sometimes knock down these Goliaths of wit ; and this one was often discomfited when met by a man of any spirit ; he took his place sulkily, put water in his wine that the others drank plentifully, and scarce said a word.

The talk was about the affairs of the day, or rather about persons than affairs : my Lady Marlborough’s fury, her daughters in old clothes and mob-caps looking out from their windows and seeing the company pass to the Drawing-Room ; the gentleman-usher’s horror when the Prince of Savoy was introduced to her Majesty in a tie-wig, no man out of a full-bottomed

periwig ever having kissed the Royal hand before; about the Mohawks and the damage they were doing, rushing through the town, killing and murdering. Some one said the ill-omened face of Mohun had been seen at the theatre the night before, and Macartney and Meredith with him. Meant to be a feast, the meeting, in spite of drink and talk, was as dismal as a funeral. Every topick started subsided into gloom. His Grace of Ormonde went away because the conversation got upon Denain, where we had been defeated in the last campaign. Esmond's General was affected at the allusion to this action too, for his comrade of Wynendael, the Count of Naffau Woudenberg had been slain there. Mr. Swift, when Esmond pledged him, said he drank no wine, and took his hat from the peg and went away, beckoning my Lord Bolingbroke to follow him; but the other bade him take his chariot and save his coach-hire, he had to speak with Colonel Esmond; and when the rest of the company withdrew to cards, these two remained behind in the dark.

Bolingbroke always spoke freely when he had drunk freely. His enemies could get any

secret out of him in that condition ; women were even employed to ply him, and take his words down. I have heard that my Lord Stair, three years after, when the Secretary fled to France and became the Pretender's minister, got all the information he wanted by putting female spies over St. John in his cups. He spoke freely now :—“ Jonathan knows nothing of this for certain, though he suspects it, and by George, Webb will take an Archbischoprick, and Jonathan a—no damme—Jonathan will take an Archbischoprick from James, I warrant me, gladly enough. Your Duke hath the string of the whole matter in his hand,” the Secretary went on. “ We have that which will force Marlborough to keep his distance, and he goes out of London in a fortnight. Prior hath his busines ; he left me this morning, and mark me, Harry, should fate carry off our august, our beloved, our most gouty and plethorick Queen, and Defender of the Faith, la bonne cause triomphera. A la santé de la bonne cause. Everything good comes from France. Wine comes from France, give us another bumper to the bonne cause.” We drank it together.

“ Will the ‘bonne cause’ turn Protestant?” asked Mr. Esmond.

“ No, hang it,” says the other, “ he’ll defend our Faith as in duty bound, but he’ll stick by his own. The Hind and the Panther shall run in the same car, by Jove. Righteousness and peace shall kiss each other; and we’ll have Father Massillon to walk down the aisle of St. Paul’s, cheek by jowl, with Dr. Sacheverel. Give us more wine, here’s a health to the ‘bonne cause,’ kneeling—damme, let’s drink it kneeling.” —He was quite flushed and wild with wine as he was talking.

“ And suppose,” says Esmond, who always had this gloomy apprehension, “ the ‘bonne cause’ should give us up to the French, as his father and uncle did before him.”

“ Give us up to the French!” starts up Bolingbroke, “ is there any English gentleman that fears that? You who have seen Blenheim and Ramillies, afraid of the French! Your ancestors and mine, and brave old Webb’s yonder, have met them in a hundred fields, and our children will be ready to do the like. Who’s he that wishes for more men from England. My

Cousin Westmoreland? give us up to the French, pshaw!"

"His uncle did," says Mr. Esmond.

"And what happened to his grandfather?" broke out St. John, filling out another bumper. "Here's to the greatest monarch England ever saw, here's to the Englishman who made a kingdom of her. Our great King came from Huntingdon, not Hanover; our fathers didn't look for a Dutchman to rule us.—Let him come and we'll keep him, and we'll show him Whitehall. If he's a traitor let us have him here to deal with him; and then there are spirits here as great as any that have gone before. There are men here that can look at danger in the face and not be frightened at it. Traitor! treason! what names are these to scare you and me? Are all Oliver's men dead, or his glorious name forgotten in fifty years? Are there no men equal to him, think you, as good, aye, as good? God save the King! and if the monarchy fails us, God save the British Republick!"

He filled another great bumper, and tossed it up and drained it wildly, just as the noise of rapid carriage-wheels approaching was stopped

at our door, and after a hurried knock and a moment's interval, Mr. Swift came into the hall, ran upstairs to the room we were dining in, and entered it with a perturbed face. St. John excited with drink, was making some wild quotation out of *Macbeth*, but Swift stopped him.

“Drink no more, my lord, for God's sake,” says he, “I come with the most dreadful news.”

“Is the Queen dead?” cries out Bolingbroke, seizing on a water-glaſs.

“No, Duke Hamilton is dead, he was murdered an hour ago by Mohun and Macartney; they had a quarrel this morning, they gave him not so much time as to write a letter. He went for a couple of his friends, and he is dead, and Mohun, too, the bloody villain, who was set on him. They fought in Hyde Park just before sun-set, the Duke killed Mohun, and Macartney came up and stabbed him, and the dog is fled. I have your chariot below, send to every part of the country and apprehend that villain; come to the Duke's house and see if any life be left in him.”

“O Beatrix, Beatrix,” thought Esmond, “and here ends my poor girl's ambition!”

CHAPTER VI.

POOR BEATRIX.

THERE had been no need to urge upon Esmond the necessity of a separation between him and Beatrix: fate had done that completely; and I think from the very moment poor Beatrix had accepted the Duke's offer, she began to assume the majestick air of a Duchefs, nay, Queen Elect, and to carry herself as one sacred and removed from us common people. Her mother and kinsman both fell into her ways, the latter scornfully perhaps, and uttering his usual gibes at her vanity and his own. There was a certain charm about this girl of which neither Colonel Esmond nor his fond mistres could forego the fascination; in spite of her faults and her pride and wilfulness, they were forced to love her; and, indeed, might be set down as

the two chief flatterers of the brilliant creature's court.

Who, in the course of his life, hath not been so bewitched, and worshipped some idol or another? Years after this passion hath been dead and buried, along with a thousand other worldly cares and ambitions, he who felt it can recall it out of its grave, and admire, almost as fondly as he did in his youth, that lovely queenly creature. I invoke that beautiful spirit from the shades and love her still; or rather I should say such a past is always present to a man; such a passion once felt forms a part of his whole being, and cannot be separated from it; it becomes a portion of the man of to-day, just as any great faith or conviction, the discovery of poetry, the awakening of religion, ever afterwards influence him; just as the wound I had at Blenheim, and of which I wear the scar, hath become part of my frame and influenced my whole body, nay, spirit subsequently, though 'twas got and healed forty years ago. Parting and forgetting! What faithful heart can do these? Our great thoughts, our great affections, the truths of our life, never leave us. Surely, they cannot separate from our

consciousness ; shall follow it whithersoever that shall go ; and are of their nature divine and immortal.

With the horrible news of this catastrophe, which was confirmed by the weeping domesticks at the Duke's own door, Esmond rode homewards as quick as his lazy coach would carry him, devising all the time how he should break the intelligence to the person most concerned in it ; and if a satire upon human vanity could be needed, that poor soul afforded it in the altered company and occupations in which Esmond found her. For days before, her chariot had been rolling the street from mercer to toy-shop—from goldsmith to laceman : her taste was perfect, or at least the fond bridegroom had thought so ; and had given entire authority over all tradesmen and for all the plate, furniture, and equipages, with which his Grace the Ambassador wished to adorn his splendid mission. She must have her picture by Kneller, a duchess not being complete without a portrait, and a noble one he made, and actually sketched in, on a cushion, a coronet, which she was about to wear. She vowed she would wear it at King James the Third's

coronation, and never a princess in the land would have become ermine better. Esmond found the ante-chamber crowded with milliners and toy-shop women, obsequious goldsmiths with jewels, salvers, and tankards ; and mercer's men with hangings, and velvets, and brocades. My Lady Duchess elect was giving audience to one famous silversmith from Exeter Change, who brought with him a great chased salver, of which he was pointing out the beauties as Colonel Esmond entered. “Come,” says she, “Cousin, and admire the taste of this pretty thing.” I think Mars and Venus were lying in the golden bower, that one gilt Cupid carried off the war-god's casque—another his sword—another his great buckler, upon which my Lord Duke Hamilton's arms with ours were to be engraved—and a fourth was kneeling down to the reclining goddes with the Ducal coronet in his hands, God help us. The next time Mr. Esmond saw that piece of plate, the arms were changed, the Ducal coronet had been replaced by a Viscount's, it formed part of the fortune of the thrifty goldsmith's own daughter, when she married my Lord Viscount Squanderfield two years after.

“Isn’t this a beautiful piece?” says Beatrix, examining it, and she pointed out the arch graces of the Cupids, and the fine carving of the languid prostrate Mars. Esmond sickened as he thought of the warrior dead in his chamber, his servants and children weeping around him; and of this smiling creature attiring herself, as it were, for that nuptial deathbed. “‘Tis a pretty piece of vanity,” says he, looking gloomily at the beautiful creature: there were flambeaux in the room lighting up the brilliant mistress of it. She lifted up the great gold salver with her fair arms.

“Vanity!” says she, haughtily. “What is vanity in you, sir, is propriety in me. You ask a Jewish price for it, Mr. Graves; but have it I will, if only to spite Mr. Esmond.”

“O Beatrix, lay it down!” says Mr. Esmond. “Herodias! you know not what you carry in the charger.”

She dropped it with a clang; the eager goldsmith running to seize his fallen ware. The lady’s face caught the fright from Esmond’s pale countenance, and her eyes shone out like beacons of alarm:—“What is it, Henry?” says she, running to him, and seizing both his hands.

“ What do you mean by your pale face and gloomy tones ? ”

“ Come away, come away,” says Esmond, leading her : she clung frightened to him, and he supported her upon his heart, bidding the scared goldsmith leave them. The man went into the next apartment, staring with surprise, and hugging his precious charger.

“ O my Beatrix, my sister,” says Esmond, still holding in his arms the pallid and affrighted creature, “ you have the greatest courage of any woman in the world ; prepare to show it now, for you have a dreadful trial to bear.”

She sprang away from the friend who would have protected her :—“ Hath he left me ? ” says she. “ We had words this morning : he was very gloomy, and I angered him : but he dared not, he dared not ! ” As she spoke a burning blush flushed over her whole face and bosom. Esmond saw it reflected in the glass by which she stood, with clenched hands, pressing her swelling heart.

“ He has left you,” says Esmond, wondering that rage rather than sorrow was in her looks.

“ And he is alive ! ” cries Beatrix, “ and you

bring me this commission ! He has left me, and you haven't dared to avenge me. You, that pretend to be the champion of our house, have let me suffer this insult ? Where is Castlewood ? I will go to my brother."

"The Duke is not alive, Beatrix," says Esmond. She looked at her cousin wildly, and fell back to the wall as though shot in the breast :— "And you come here, and—and—you killed him ?"

"No, thank Heaven," her kinsman said, "the blood of that noble heart doth not stain my sword. In its last hour it was faithful to thee, Beatrix Esmond. Vain and cruel woman ! kneel and thank the Awful Heaven which awards life and death, and chastises pride, that the noble Hamilton died true to you ; at least that 'twas not your quarrel, or your pride, or your wicked vanity, that drove him to his fate. He died by the bloody sword which already had drank your own father's blood. O woman, O sister ! to that sad field where two corpses are lying—for the murderer died too by the hand of the man he slew—can you bring no mourners but your revenge and your vanity ? God help

and pardon thee, Beatrix, as He brings this awful punishment to your hard and rebellious heart."

Esmond had scarce done speaking, when his mistress came in. The colloquy between him and Beatrix had lasted but a few minutes, during which time Esmond's servant had carried the disastrous news through the household. The army of Vanity-Fair, waiting without, gathered up all their fripperies and fled aghast. Tender Lady Castlewood had been in talk above with Dean Atterbury, the pious creature's almoner and director; and the Dean had entered with her as a physician whose place was at a sick bed. Beatrix's mother looked at Esmond and ran towards her daughter with a pale face and open heart and hands, all kindness and pity. But Beatrix passed her by, nor would she have any of the medicaments of the spiritual physician. "I am best in my own room and by myself," she said. Her eyes were quite dry; nor did Esmond ever see them otherwise, save once, in respect to that grief. She gave him a cold hand as she went out: "Thank you, brother," she said, in a low voice, and with a simplicity more touching

than tears, “all you have said is true and kind, and I will go away and ask pardon.” The three others remained behind, and talked over the dreadful story. It affected Dr. Atterbury more even than us, as it seemed. The death of Mohun, her husband’s murderer, was more awful to my mistress than even the Duke’s unhappy end. Esmond gave at length what particulars he knew of their quarrel, and the cause of it. The two noblemen had long been at war with respect to the Lord Gerard’s property, whose two daughters, my Lord Duke and Mohun had married. They had met by appointment that day at the lawyer’s in Lincoln’s Inn Fields ; had words, which though they appeared very trifling to those who heard them, were not so to men exasperated by long and previous enmity. Mohun asked my Lord Duke where he could see his Grace’s friends, and within an hour had sent two of his own to arrange this deadly duel. It was pursued with such fierceness, and sprung from so trifling a cause, that all men agreed at the time that there was a party of which these three notorious brawlers were but agents, who desired to take Duke

Hamilton's life away. They fought three on a side, as in that tragick meeting twelve years back, which hath been recounted already, and in which Mohun performed his second murder. They rushed in, and closed upon each other at once without any feints or crossing of swords even, and stabbed one at the other desperately, each receiving many wounds; and Mohun having his death wound, and my Lord Duke lying by him, Macartney came up and stabbed his Grace as he lay on the ground, and gave him the blow of which he died. Colonel Macartney denied this, of which the horror and indignation of the whole kingdom would nevertheless have him guilty, and fled the country whither he never returned.

What was the real cause of the Duke Hamilton's death?—a paltry quarrel that might easily have been made up, and with a ruffian so low, base, profligate, and degraded with former crimes and repeated murders, that a man of such a renown and princely rank as my Lord Duke might have disdained to soil his sword with the blood of such a villain. But his spirit was so high that those who wished his death knew that his courage

was like his charity, and never turned any man away; and he died by the hands of Mohun, and the other two cut-throats that were set on him. The Queen's ambassador to Paris died, the loyal and devoted servant of the House of Stuart, a Royal Prince of Scotland himself, and carrying the confidence, the repentance of Queen Anne along with his own open devotion, and the good-will of millions in the country more, to the Queen's exiled brother and sovereign.

That party to which Lord Mohun belonged had the benefit of his service, and now were well rid of such a ruffian. He and Meredith, and Macartney were the Duke of Marlborough's men; and the two colonels had been broke but the year before for drinking perdition to the Tories. His Grace was a Whig now and a Hanoverian, and as eager for war as Prince Eugene himself. I say not that he was privy to Duke Hamilton's death, I say that his party profited by it: and that three desperate and bloody instruments were found to effect that murder.

As Esmond and the Dean walked away from

Kensington discoursing of this tragedy, and how fatal it was to the cause which they both had at heart; the street-criers were already out with their broadsides, shouting through the town the full, true, and horrible account of the death of Lord Mohun and Duke Hamilton in a duel. A fellow had got to Kensington, and was crying it in the Square there at very early morning, when Mr. Esmond happened to pass by. He drove the man from under Beatrix's very window, whereof the casement had been set open. The sun was shining though 'twas November: he had seen the market-carts rolling into London, the guard relieved at the Palace, the labourers trudging to their work in the gardens between Kensington and the City—the wandering merchants and hawkers filling the air with their cries. The world was going to its business again, although Dukes lay dead and ladies mourned for them; and kings, very likely, lost their chances. So night and day pass away, and to-morrow comes, and our place knows us not. Esmond thought of the courier, now galloping on the north road to inform him, who was Earl of Arran yesterday,

that he was Duke of Hamilton to-day, and of a thousand great schemes, hopes, ambitions, that were alive in the gallant heart, beating a few hours since, and now in a little dust quiescent.

CHAPTER VII.

I VISIT CASTLEWOOD ONCE MORE.

THUS, for a third time, Beatrix's ambitious hopes were circumvented, and she might well believe that a special malignant fate watched and pursued her, tearing her prize out of her hand just as she seemed to grasp it, and leaving her with only rage and grief for her portion. Whatever her feelings might have been of anger or of sorrow (and I fear me that the former emotion was that which most tore her heart,) she would take no confidant, as people of softer natures would have done under such a calamity; her mother and her kinsman knew that she would disdain their pity, and that to offer it would be but to infuriate the cruel wound which fortune had inflicted. We knew that her pride was awfully humbled and punished by this sudden

and terrible blow ; she wanted no teaching of ours to point out the sad moral of her story. Her fond mother could give but her prayers, and her kinsman his faithful friendship and patience to the unhappy, stricken creature ; and it was only by hints, and a word or two uttered months afterwards, that Beatrix showed she understood their silent commiseration, and on her part was secretly thankful for their forbearance. The people about the Court said there was that in her manner which frightened away scoffing and condolence : she was above their triumph and their pity, and acted her part in that dreadful tragedy greatly and courageously ; so that those who liked her least were yet forced to admire her. We, who watched her after her disaster could not but respect the indomitable courage and majestick calm with which she bore it. “ I would rather see her tears than her pride,” her mother said, who was accustomed to bear her sorrows in a very different way, and to receive them as the stroke of God, with an awful submission and meekness. But Beatrix’s nature was different to that tender parent’s ; she seemed to accept her grief, and to defy it ; nor would she allow

it (I believe not even in private, and in her own chamber) to extort from her the confession of even a tear of humiliation or a cry of pain. Friends and children of our race, who come after me, in which way will you bear your trials? I know one that prays God will give you love rather than pride, and that the Eye-all-seeing shall find you in the humble place. Not that we should judge proud spirits otherwise than charitably. 'Tis nature hath fashioned some for ambition and dominion, as it hath formed others for obedience and gentle submission. The leopard follows his nature as the lamb does, and acts after leopard-law: she can neither help her beauty, nor her courage, nor her cruelty; nor a single spot on her shining coat; nor the conquering spirit which impels her, nor the shot which brings her down.

During that well-founded panick the Whigs had, lest the Queen should forsake their Hanoverian Prince, bound by oaths and treaties as she was to him, and recall her brother, who was allied to her by yet stronger ties of nature and duty; the Prince of Savoy, and the boldest of

that party of the Whigs, were for bringing the young Duke of Cambridge over, in spite of the Queen and the outcry of her Tory servants, arguing that the Electoral Prince, a Peer and Prince of the Blood Royal of this Realm, too, and in the line of succession to the Crown, had a right to sit in the Parliament whereof he was a member, and to dwell in the country which he one day was to govern. Nothing but the strongest ill-will expressed by the Queen, and the people about her, and menaces of the Royal resentment, should this scheme be persisted in, prevented it from being carried into effect.

The boldest on our side were, in like manner, for having our Prince into the country. The undoubted inheritor of the right divine; the feelings of more than half the nation, of almost all the clergy, of the gentry of England and Scotland with him; entirely innocent of the crime for which his father suffered—brave, young, handsome, unfortunate—who in England would dare to molest the Prince should he come among us, and fling himself upon British generosity, hospitality and honour? An invader with an army of Frenchmen behind him, Englishmen of

spirit would resist to the death, and drive back to the shores whence he came; but a Prince, alone, armed with his right only, and relying on the loyalty of his people, was sure, many of his friends argued, of welcome, at least of safety, among us. The hand of his sister the Queen, of the people his subjects, never could be raised to do him a wrong. But the Queen was timid by nature, and the successive ministers she had, had private causes for their irresolution. The bolder and honester men, who had at heart the illustrious young exile's cause, had no scheme of interest of their own to prevent them from seeing the right done, and, provided only he came as an Englishman, were ready to venture their all to welcome and defend him.

St. John and Harley both had kind words in plenty for the Prince's adherents, and gave him endless promises of future support: but hints and promises were all they could be got to give; and some of his friends were for measures much bolder, more efficacious, and more open. With a party of these, some of whom are yet alive, and some whose names Mr. Esmond has no right to mention, he found himself engaged

the year after that miserable death of Duke Hamilton, which deprived the Prince of his most courageous ally in this country. Dean Atterbury was one of the friends whom Esmond may mention, as the brave bishop is now beyond exile and persecution, and to him, and one or two more, the Colonel opened himself of a scheme of his own, that, backed by a little resolution on the Prince's part, could not fail of bringing about the accomplishment of their dearest wishes.

My young Lord Viscount Castlewood had not come to England to keep his majority, and had now been absent from the country for several years. The year when his sister was to be married and Duke Hamilton died, my lord was kept at Bruxelles by his wife's lying-in. The gentle Clotilda could not bear her husband out of her sight ; perhaps she mistrusted the young scapegrace should he ever get loose from her leading-strings ; and she kept him by her side to nurse the baby and administer posset to the gossips. Many a laugh poor Beatrix had had about Frank's uxoriousness : his mother would have gone to Clotilda when her time was coming, but that the mother-in-law was already in

possession, and the negotiations for poor Beatrix's marriage were begun. A few months after the horrid catastrophe in Hyde Park, my mistress and her daughter retired to Castlewood, where my lord, it was expected, would soon join them. But to say truth, their quiet household was little to his taste: he could be got to come to Walcote but once after his first campaign; and then the young rogue spent more than half his time in London, not appearing at Court or in publick under his own name and title, but frequenting plays, bagnios, and the very worst company, under the name of Captain Esmond (whereby his innocent kinsman got more than once into trouble); and so under various pretexts, and in pursuit of all sorts of pleasures, until he plunged into the lawful one of marriage, Frank Castlewood had remained away from this country, and was unknown, save amongst the gentlemen of the army, with whom he had served abroad. The fond heart of his mother was pained by this long absence. 'Twas all that Henry Esmond could do to soothe her natural mortification, and find excuses for his kinsman's levity.

In the autumn of the year 1713, Lord Castle-

wood thought of returning home. His first child had been a daughter; Clotilda was in the way of gratifying his lordship with a second, and the pious youth thought that by bringing his wife to his ancestral home, by prayers to St. Philip of Castlewood, and what not, Heaven might be induced to bless him with a son this time, for whose coming the expectant mamma was very anxious.

The long-debated peace had been proclaimed this year at the end of March; and France was open to us. Just as Frank's poor mother had made all things ready for Lord Castlewood's reception, and was eagerly expecting her son, it was by Colonel Esmond's means that the kind lady was disappointed of her longing, and obliged to defer once more the darling hope of her heart.

Esmond took horses to Castlewood. He had not seen its antient grey towers and well-remembered woods for nearly fourteen years, and since he rode thence with my lord, to whom his mistress with her young children by her side waved an adieu. What ages seemed to have passed since then, what years of action and passion, of care, love, hope, disaster! The

children were grown up now and had stories of their own. As for Esmond, he felt to be a hundred years old ; his dear mistres only seemed unchanged ; she looked and welcomed him quite as of old. There was the fountain in the court babbling its familiar musick, the old hall and its furniture, the carved chair my late lord used, the very flagon he drank from. Esmond's mistress knew he would like to sleep in the little room he used to occupy ; 'twas made ready for him, and wall-flowers and sweet herbs set in the adjoining chamber, the chaplain's room.

In tears of not unmanly emotion, with prayers of submission to the awful Dispenser of death and life, of good and evil fortune, Mr. Esmond passed a part of that first night at Castlewood, lying awake for many hours as the clock kept tolling (in tones so well remembered), looking back, as all men will, that revisit their home of childhood, over the great gulf of time, and surveying himself on the distant bank yonder, a sad little melancholy boy, with his lord still alive, —his dear mistres, a girl yet, her children sporting around her. Years ago, a boy on that very bed, when she had blessed him and called him her

knight, he had made a vow to be faithful and never desert her dear service. Had he kept that fond boyish promise? Yes, before Heaven; yes, praise be to God! His life had been hers; his blood, his fortune, his name, his whole heart ever since had been hers and her children's. All night long he was dreaming his boyhood over again, and waking fitfully; he half fancied he heard Father Holt calling to him from the next chamber, and that he was coming in and out from the mysterious window.

Esmond rose up before the dawn, passed into the next room, where the air was heavy with the odour of the wall-flowers; looked into the brazier where the papers had been burnt, into the old presses where Holt's books and papers had been kept, and tried the spring, and whether the window worked still. The spring had not been touched for years, but yielded at length, and the whole fabric of the window sank down. He lifted it and it relapsed into its frame; no one had ever passed thence since Holt used it sixteen years ago.

Esmond remembered his poor lord saying, on the last day of his life, that Holt used to come

in and out of the house like a ghost, and knew that the Father liked these mysteries, and practised such secret disguises, entrances, and exits : this was the way the ghost came and went his pupil had always conjectured. Esmond closed the casement up again as the dawn was rising over Castlewood village ; he could hear the clinking at the blacksmith's forge yonder among the trees, across the green, and past the river, on which a mist still lay sleeping.

Next Esmond opened that long cupboard over the woodwork of the mantelpiece, big enough to hold a man, and in which Mr. Holt used to keep sundry secret properties of his. The two swords he remembered so well, as a boy, lay actually there still, and Esmond took them out and wiped them, with a strange curiosity of emotion. There were a bundle of papers here, too, which no doubt had been left at Holt's last visit to the place, in my Lord Viscount's life, that very day when the priest had been arrested and taken to Hexham Castle. Esmond made free with these papers, and found treasonable matter of King William's reign, the names of Charnock and Perkins, Sir John Fenwick and Sir John

Friend, Rookwood and Lodwick, Lords Montgomery, and Ailesbury, Clarendon, and Yarmouth, that had all been engaged in plots against the usurper ; a letter from the Duke of Berwick, too, and one from the King at St. Germains, offering to confer upon his trusty and well-beloved Francis Viscount Castlewood the titles of Earl and Marquis of Esmond, bestowed by patent royal, and in the fourth year of his reign, upon Thomas Viscount Castlewood and the heirs male of his body, in default of which issue, the ranks and dignities were to pass to Francis aforesaid.

This was the paper, whereof my lord had spoken, which Holt showed him the very day he was arrested, and for an answer to which he would come back in a week's time. I put these papers hastily into the crypt, whence I had taken them, being interrupted by a tapping of a light finger at the ring of the chamber-door : 'twas my kind mistress, with her face full of love and welcome. She, too, had passed the night wakefully, no, doubt ; but neither asked the other how the hours had been spent. There are things we divine without speaking, and know

though they happen out of our sight. This fond lady hath told me that she knew both days when I was wounded abroad. Who shall say how far sympathy reaches, and how truly love can prophesy? “I looked into your room,” was all she said; “the bed was vacant, the little old bed! I knew I should find you here.” And tender and blushing faintly with a benediction in her eyes, the gentle creature kissed him.

They walked out, hand in hand through the old court, and to the terrace-walk, where the grass was glistening with dew, and the birds in the green woods above were singing their delicious choruses under the blushing morning sky. How well all things were remembered! The antient towers and gables of the hall darkling against the east, the purple shadows on the green slopes, the quaint devices and carvings of the dial, the forest-crowned heights, the fair yellow plain cheerful with crops and corn, the shining river rolling through it towards the pearly hills beyond; all these were before us, along with a thousand beautiful memories of our youth, beautiful and sad, but as real and vivid in our minds as that fair and always remembered

scene our eyes beheld once more. We forget nothing. The memory sleeps, but wakens again; I often think how it shall be, when, after the last sleep of death, the *reveillée* shall arouse us for ever, and the past in one flash of self-consciousness rush back, like the soul, revivified.

The house would not be up for some hours yet (it was July, and the dawn was only just awake), and here Esmond opened himself to his mistress, of the business he had in hand, and what part Frank was to play in it. He knew he could confide anything to her, and that the fond soul would die rather than reveal it; and bidding her keep the secret from all, he laid it entirely before his mistress (always as staunch a little loyalist as any in the kingdom), and indeed was quite sure that any plan of his was secure of her applause and sympathy. Never was such a glorious scheme to her partial mind, never such a devoted knight to execute it. An hour or two may have passed whilst they were having their colloquy. Beatrix came out to them just as their talk was over; her tall beautiful form robed in sable (which she wore without ostentation ever since last year's catastrophe) sweeping over the

green terrace, and casting its shadows before her across the grafts.

She made us one of her grand curtsies smiling, and called us “the young people.” She was older, paler, and more majestick than in the year before; her mother seemed the youngest of the two. She never once spoke of her grief, Lady Castlewood told Esmond, or alluded, save by a quiet word or two, to the death of her hopes.

When Beatrix came back to Castlewood she took to visiting all the cottages and all the sick. She set up a school of children, and taught singing to some of them. We had a pair of beautiful old organs in Castlewood Church, on which she played admirably, so that the musick there became to be known in the country for many miles round, and no doubt people came to see the fair organist as well as to hear her. Parson Tusher and his wife were established at the vicarage, but his wife had brought him no children wherewith Tom might meet his enemies at the gate. Honest Tom took care not to have many such, his great shovel-hat was in his hand for everybody. He was profuse of bows and

compliments. He behaved to Esmond as if the Colonel had been a Commander-in-Chief ; he dined at the Hall that day, being Sunday, and would not partake of pudding except under extreme pressure. He deplored my lord's perversion, but drank his lordship's health very devoutly ; and an hour before at church sent the Colonel to sleep, with a long, learned, and refreshing sermon.

Esmond's visit home was but for two days ; the business he had in hand calling him away and out of the country. Ere he went, he saw Beatrix but once alone, and then she summoned him out of the long tapestry room, where he and his mistress were sitting, quite as in old times, into the adjoining chamber, that had been Viscountess Isabel's sleeping apartment, and where Esmond perfectly well remembered seeing the old lady sitting up in the bed, in her night-rail, that morning when the troop of guard came to fetch her. The most beautiful woman in England lay in that bed now, whereof the great damask hangings were scarce faded since Esmond saw them last.

Here stood Beatrix in her black robes, holding

a box in her hand ; 'twas that which Esmond had given her before her marriage, stamped with a coronet which the disappointed girl was never to wear ; and containing his aunt's legacy of diamonds.

“ You had best take these with you, Harry,” says she ; “ I have no need of diamonds any more.” There was not the least token of emotion in her quiet low voice. She held out the black shagreen case with her fair arm, that did not shake in the least. Esmond saw she wore a black velvet bracelet on it, with my Lord Duke’s picture in enamel : he had given it her but three days before he fell.

Esmond said the stones were his no longer, and strove to turn off that proffered restoration with a laugh : “ Of what good,” says he, “ are they to me ? The diamond loop to his hat did not set off Prince Eugene, and will not make my yellow face look any handsomer.”

“ You will give them to your wife, cousin,” says she. “ My cousin, your wife has a lovely complexion and shape.”

“ Beatrix,” Esmond burst out, the old fire flaming out as it would at times, “ will you wear

those trinkets at your marriage? You whispered once you did not know me: you know me better now: how I fought, what I have sighed for, for ten years, what foregone."

"A price for your constancy, my lord!" says she; "such a preux chevalier, wants to be paid. O fie, cousin."

"Again," Esmond spoke out, "if I do something you have at heart; something worthy of me and you; something that shall make me a name with which to endow you; will you take it? There was a chance for me once, you said, is it impossible to recal it? Never shake your head, but hear me: say you will hear me a year hence. If I come back to you and bring you fame, will that please you? If I do what you desire most —what he who is dead desired most,—will that soften you?"

"What is it, Henry," says she, her face lighting up; "what mean you?"

"Ask no questions," he said, "wait, and give me but time; if I bring back that you long for, that I have a thousand times heard you pray for, will you have no reward for him who has done you that service? Put away those trinkets, keep

them : it shall not be at my marriage, it shall not be at yours : but if man can do it, I swear a day shall come when there shall be a feast in your house, and you shall be proud to wear them. I say no more now ; put aside these words, and lock away yonder box until the day when I shall remind you of both. All I pray of you now is, to wait and to remember."

" You are going out of the country ? " says Beatrix, in some agitation.

" Yes, to-morrow," says Esmond.

" To Lorraine, cousin ? " says Beatrix, laying her hand on his arm, 'twas the hand on which she wore the Duke's bracelet. " Stay, Harry ! " continued she, with a tone that had more despondency in it than she was accustomed to show. " Hear a last word. I do love you. I do admire you,—who would not, that has known such love as yours has been for us all ? But I think I have no heart ; at least, I have never seen the man that could touch it ; and had I found him, I would have followed him in rags, had he been a private soldier, or to sea, like one of those buccaneers you used to read to us about when we were children. I would do anything for such a

man, bear anything for him : but I never found one. You were ever too much of a slave to win my heart, even my Lord Duke could not command it. I had not been happy had I married him. I knew that three months after our engagement—and was too vain to break it. O Harry ! I cried once or twice, not for him, but with tears of rage because I could not be sorry for him. I was frightened to find I was glad of his death ; and were I joined to you, I should have the same sense of servitude, the same longing to escape. We should both be unhappy, and you the most, who are as jealous as the Duke was himself. I tried to love him ; I tried, indeed I did : affected gladness when he came : submitted to hear when he was by me, and tried the wife's part I thought I was to play for the rest of my days. But half an hour of that complaisance wearied me, and what would a lifetime be ? My thoughts were away when he was speaking ; and I was thinking, O that this man would drop my hand, and rise up from before my feet. I knew his great and noble qualities, greater and nobler than mine a thousand times, as yours are, cousin, I tell you, a million and a million times better.

But 'twas not for these I took him. I took him to have a great place in the world, and I lost it,—I lost it and do not deplore him,—and I often thought as I listened to his fond vows and ardent words, O, if I yield to this man, and meet *the other*, I shall hate him and leave him. I am not good, Harry: my mother is gentle and good like an angel. I wonder how she should have had such a child. She is weak, but she would die rather than do a wrong; I am stronger than she, but I would do it out of defiance. I do not care for what the parsons tell me with their droning sermons; I used to see them at Court as mean and as worthlefs as the meanest woman there. O, I am sick and weary of the world! I wait but for one thing, and when 'tis done, I will take Frank's religion and your poor mother's, and go into a nunnery, and end like her. Shall I wear the diamonds then?—they say the nuns wear their best trinkets the day they take the veil. I will put them away as you bid me; farewell, cousin, mamma is pacing the next room, racking her little head to know what we have been saying. She is jealous, all women are. I sometimes think that is the only womanly quality I have."

“Farewell. Farewell, brother.” She gave him her cheek as a brotherly privilege. The cheek was as cold as marble.

Esmond’s mistress showed no signs of jealousy when he returned to the room where she was. She had schooled herself so as to look quite inscrutably, when she had a mind. Amongst her other feminine qualities she had that of being a perfect dissembler.

He rid away from Castlewood to attempt the task he was bound on, and stand or fall by it: in truth his state of mind was such, that he was eager for some outward excitement to counteract that gnawing malady which he was inwardly enduring.

CHAPTER VIII.

I TRAVEL TO FRANCE, AND BRING HOME A PORTRAIT
OF RIGAUD.

M R. ESMOND did not think fit to take leave at Court: or to inform all the world of Pall Mall and the coffee-houses, that he was about to quit England; and chose to depart in the most private manner possible. He procured a pass as for a Frenchman, through Dr. Atterbury, who did that business for him, getting the signature even from Lord Bolingbroke's office, without any personal application to the Secretary. Lockwood, his faithful servant, he took with him to Castlewood, and left behind there: giving out ere he left London that he himself was sick, and gone to Hampshire for country air, and so departed as silently as might be upon his business.

As Frank Castlewood's aid was indispensable

for Mr. Esmond's scheme, his first visit was to Bruxelles, (passing by way of Antwerp, where the Duke of Marlborough was in exile,) and in the first-named place Harry found his dear young Benedick, the married man, who appeared to be rather out of humour with his matrimonial chain, and clogged with the obstinate embraces which Clotilda kept round his neck. Colonel Esmond was not presented to her ; but Monsieur Simon was, a gentleman of the Royal Cravat, (Esmond bethought him of the regiment of his honest Irishman, whom he had seen that day after Malplaquet, when he first set eyes on the young King;) and Monsieur Simon was introduced to the Viscountess Castlewood, *née* Comptesse Wertheim ; to the numerous counts, the Lady Clotilda's tall brothers ; to her father the chamberlain ; and to the lady his wife, Frank's mother-in-law, a tall and majestic person of large proportions, such as became the mother of such a company of grenadiers, as her warlike sons formed. The whole race were at free quarters, in the little castle nigh to Bruxelles which Frank had taken ; rode his horses ; drank his wine ; and lived easily at the poor lad's charges.

Mr. Esmond had always maintained a perfect fluency in the French, which was his mother tongue ; and if this family (that spoke French with the twang which the Flemings use) discovered any inaccuracy in Mr. Simon's pronunciation, 'twas to be attributed to the latter's long residence in England, where he had married and remained ever since he was taken prisoner at Blenheim. His story was perfectly pat ; there were none there to doubt it, save honest Frank, and he was charmed with his kinsman's scheme, when he became acquainted with it ; and, in truth, always admired Colonel Esmond with an affectionate fidelity, and thought his cousin the wisest and best of all cousins and men. Frank entered heart and soul into the plan, and liked it the better as it was to take him to Paris, out of reach of his brothers, his father, and his mother-in-law, whose attentions rather fatigued him.

Castlewood, I have said, was born in the same year as the Prince of Wales ; had not a little of the Prince's air, height, and figure ; and, especially since he had seen the Chevalier de St. George on the occasion before-named, took no small pride in his resemblance to a person so

illustrious : which likeness he increased by all the means in his power, wearing fair brown periwigs, such as the Prince wore, and ribbands and so forth of the Chevalier's colour.

This resemblance was, in truth, the circumstance on which Mr. Esmond's scheme was founded ; and having secured Frank's secrecy and enthusiasm, he left him to continue his journey, and see the other personages on whom its success depended. The place whither Mr. Simon next travelled was Bar, in Lorraine, where that merchant arrived with a consignment of broadcloths, valuable laces from Malines, and letters for his correspondent there.

Would you know how a prince, heroick from misfortunes, and descended from a line of kings, whose race seemed to be doomed like the Atridæ of old ;—would you know how he was employed when the envoy who came to him through danger and difficulty beheld him for the first time ? The young king, in a flannel jacket, was at Tennis with the gentlemen of his suite, crying out after the balls, and swearing like the meanest of his subjects. The next time Mr. Esmond saw him, 'twas when Monsieur Simon took a packet of

laces to Miss Oglethorpe ; the Prince's ante-chamber in those days, at which ignoble door men were forced to knock for admission to his Majesty. The admission was given, the envoy found the King and the mistress together ; the pair were at cards, and his Majesty was in liquor. He cared more for three honours than three kingdoms ; and a half-dozen glasses of ratafia made him forget all his woes and his losses, his father's crown, and his grandfather's head.

Mr. Esmond did not open himself to the Prince then. His Majesty was scarce in a condition to hear him ; and he doubted whether a king who drank so much could keep a secret in his fuddled head ; or whether a hand that shook so, was strong enough to grasp at a crown. However at last, and after taking counsel with the Prince's advisers, amongst whom were many gentlemen honest and faithful, Esmond's plan was laid before the King, and her actual Majesty Queen Oglethorpe, in council. The Prince liked the scheme well enough ; 'twas easy and daring, and suited to his reckless gaiety and lively youthful spirit. In the morning after he had

slept his wine off, he was very gay, lively, and agreeable. His manner had an extreme charm of archness, and a kind simplicity ; and to do her justice, her Oglethorpean Majesty was kind, acute, resolute, and of good counsel ; she gave the Prince much good advice, that he was too weak to follow ; and loved him with a fidelity, which he returned with an ingratitude quite Royal.

Having his own forebodings regarding his scheme, should it ever be fulfilled, and his usual skeptic doubts as to the benefit which might accrue to the country by bringing a tipsy young monarch back to it, Colonel Esmond had his audience of leave and quiet. Monsieur Simon took his departure. At any rate the youth at Bar was as good as the older Pretender at Hanover ; if the worst came to the worst, the Englishman could be dealt with as easy as the German. Monsieur Simon trotted on that long journey from Nancy to Paris, and saw that famous town, stealthily and like a spy, as in truth he was ; and where, sure, more magnificence and more misery is heaped together, more rags and lace, more filth and gilding, than in any city in this world. Here he was put in communication

with the King's best friend, his half brother, the famous Duke of Berwick ; Esmond recognised him as the stranger who had visited Castlewood now near twenty years ago. His Grace opened to him when he found that Mr. Esmond was one of Webb's brave regiment, that had once been his Grace's own. He was the sword and buckler indeed of the Stuart cause : there was no stain on his shield, except the bar across it, which Marlborough's sister left him. Had Berwick been his father's heir, James the Third had assuredly sat on the English throne. He could dare, endure, strike, speak, be silent. The fire and genius, perhaps, he had not (that were given to baser men), but except these, he had some of the best qualities of a leader. His Grace knew Esmond's father and history ; and hinted at the latter in such a way as made the Colonel to think he was aware of the particulars of that story. But Esmond did not choose to enter on it, nor did the Duke press him. Mr. Esmond said, “No doubt he should come by his name, if ever greater people came by theirs.”

What confirmed Esmond in his notion that the Duke of Berwick knew of his case was, that

when the Colonel went to pay his duty at St. Germains, her Majesty once addressed him by the title of Marquis. He took the Queen the dutiful remembrances of her goddaughter, and the lady whom, in the days of her prosperity, her Majesty had befriended. The Queen remembered Rachel Esmond perfectly well, had heard of my Lord Castlewood's conversion, and was much edified by that act of Heaven in his favour. She knew that others of that family had been of the only true church too : "Your father and your mother, Monsieur le Marquis," her Majesty said (that was the only time she used the phrase). Monsieur Simon bowed very low, and said he had found other parents than his own who had taught him differently ; but these had only one king : on which her Majesty was pleased to give him a medal blessed by the Pope, which had been found very efficacious in cases similar to his own, and to promise she would offer up prayers for his conversion and that of the family : which no doubt this pious lady did, though up to the present moment, and after twenty-seven years, Colonel Esmond is bound to say that neither the medal nor the prayers have had

the slightest known effect upon his religious convictions.

As for the splendour of Versailles, Monsieur Simon, the merchant, only beheld them as a humble and distant spectator, seeing the old King but once, when he went to feed his carps ; and asking for no presentation at his Majesty's Court.

By this time my Lord Viscount Castlewood was got to Paris, where, as the London prints presently announced, her ladyship was brought to bed of a son and heir. For a long while afterwards she was in a delicate state of health, and ordered by the physicians not to travel ; otherwise 'twas well known that the Viscount Castlewood proposed returning to England, and taking up his residence at his own seat.

Whilst he remained at Paris, my Lord Castlewood had his picture done by the famous French painter Monsieur Rigaud, a present for his mother in London ; and this piece Monsieur Simon took back with him when he returned to that city, which he reached about May, in the year 1714, very soon after which time my Lady Castlewood and her daughter, and their kinsman,

Colonel Esmond, who had been at Castlewood all this time, likewise returned to London; her ladyship occupying her house at Kensington, Mr. Esmond returning to his lodgings at Knightsbridge, nearer the town, and once more making his appearance at all publick places, his health greatly improved by his long stay in the country.

The portrait of my lord, in a handsome gilt frame, was hung up in the place of honour in her ladyship's drawing-room. His lordship was represented in his scarlet uniform of Captain of the Guard, with a light-brown perriwig, a cuirass under his coat, a blue ribbon, and a fall of Bruxelles lace. Many of her ladyship's friends admired the piece beyond measure, and flocked to see it; Bishop Atterbury, Mr. Lefly, good old Mr. Collier, and others amongst the clergy were delighted with the performance, and many among the first quality examined and praised it; only I must own that Doctor Tusher happening to come up to London, and seeing the picture, (it was ordinarily covered by a curtain, but on this day, Miss Beatrix happened to be looking at it when the Doctor arrived,) the Vicar of Castlewood vowed he could not see any resemblance in the

piece to his old pupil, except, perhaps, a little about the chin and the perriwig ; but we all of us convinced him, that he had not seen Frank for five years or more ; that he knew no more about the Fine Arts than a plough-boy, and that he must be mistaken ; and we sent him home assured that the piece was an excellent likeness. As for my Lord Bolingbroke, who honoured her ladyship with a visit occasionally, when Colonel Esmond showed him the picture, he burst out laughing, and asked what devilry he was engaged on ? Esmond owned simply that the portrait was not that of Viscount Castlewood, besought the Secretary on his honour to keep the secret, said that the ladies of the house were enthusiastick Jacobites, as was well known ; and confessed that the picture was that of the Chevalier St. George.

The truth is, that Mr. Simon, waiting upon Lord Castlewood one day at Monsieur Rigaud's, whilst his lordship was sitting for his picture, affected to be much struck with a piece representing the Chevalier, whereof the head only was finished, and purchased it of the painter for a hundred crowns. It had been intended, the artist said, for Miss Oglethorpe, the Prince's mistress, but

that young lady quitting Paris, had left the work on the artist's hands ; and taking this piece home, when my lord's portrait arrived, Colonel Esmond, alias Monsieur Simon, had copied the uniform and other accessories from my lord's picture to fill up Rigaud's incomplete canvas : the Colonel all his life having been a practitioner of painting, and especially followed it during his long residence in the cities of Flanders, among the master-pieces of Vandyck and Rubens. My grandson hath the piece, such as it is, in Virginia now.

At the commencement of the month of June, Miss Beatrix Esmond, and my Lady Viscountess, her mother, arrived from Castlewood ; the former to resume her service at Court, which had been interrupted by the fatal catastrophe of Duke Hamilton's death. She once more took her place then in her Majesty's suite, and at the maids' table, being always a favourite with Mrs. Masham, the Queen's chief woman, partly, perhaps, on account of her bitterness against the Duchess of Marlborough, whom Miss Beatrix loved no better than her rival did. The gentlemen about the Court, my Lord Bolingbroke amongst others, owned that the young lady had come back

handsomer than ever, and that the serious and tragick air, which her face now involuntarily wore, became her better than her former smiles and archness.

All the old domesticks at the little house of Kensington-Square, were changed; the old steward that had served the family any time these five and twenty years, since the birth of the children of the house, was despatched into the kingdom of Ireland to see my lord's estate there: the housekeeper, who had been my lady's woman time out of mind, and the attendant of the young children, was sent away grumbling to Walcote, to see to the new painting and preparing of that house, which my Lady Dowager intended to occupy for the future, giving up Castlewood to her daughter-in-law, that might be expected daily from France. Another servant the viscountess had was dismissed too—with a gratuity—on the pretext that her ladyship's train of domesticks must be diminished; so finally, there was not left in the household a single person who had belonged to it during the time my young Lord Castlewood was yet at home.

For the plan which Colonel Esmond had in view, and the stroke he intended, 'twas necessary that the very smallest number of persons should be put in possession of his secret. It scarce was known, except to three or four out of his family, and it was kept to a wonder.

On the 10th of June, 1714, there came by Mr. Prior's messenger from Paris, a letter from my Lord Viscount Castlewood to his mother, saying that he had been foolish in regard of money matters, that he was ashamed to own he had lost at play, and by other extravagancies; and that instead of having great entertainments as he had hoped at Castlewood this year, he must live as quiet as he could, and make every effort to be saving. So far every word of poor Frank's letter was true, nor was there a doubt that he and his tall brother-in-law had spent a great deal more than they ought, and engaged the revenues of the Castlewood property, which the fond mother had husbanded and improved so carefully during the time of her guardianship.

His "Clotilda," Castlewood went on to say, "was still delicate, and the physicians thought her lying-in had best take place at Paris. He

should come without her ladyship, and be at his mother's house, about the 17th or 18th day of June, proposing to take horse from Paris immediately, and bringing but a single servant with him ; and he requested that the lawyers of Gray's Inn might be invited to meet him with their account, and the land-steward come from Castlewood with his, so that he might settle with them speedily, raise a sum of money whereof he stood in need, and be back to his viscountess by the time of her lying-in." Then his lordship gave some of the news of the town, sent his remembrance to kinsfolk, and so the letter ended. 'Twas put in the common post, and no doubt the French police and the English there had a copy of it, to which they were exceeding welcome.

Two days after another letter was despatched by the publick post of France, in the same open way, and this, after giving news of the fashion at Court there, ended by the following sentences, in which, but for those that had the key, 'twould be difficult for any man to find any secret lurking at all :

"(The King will take) medicine on Thursday.

His Majesty is better than he hath been of late, though incommoded by indigestion from his too great appetite. Madame Maintenon continues well. They have performed a play of Mons. Racine at St. Cyr. The Duke of Shrewsbury and Mr. Prior our envoy, and all the English nobility here were present at it. (The Viscount Castlewood's passports) were refused to him, 'twas said; his lordship being sued by a goldsmith, for *Vaisselle plate*, and a pearl necklace supplied to Mademoiselle Meruel of the French Comedy. 'Tis a pity such news should get abroad (and travel to England) about our young nobility here. Mademoiselle Meruel has been sent to the Fort l'Evesque; they say she has ordered not only plate, but furniture, and a chariot and horses (under that lord's name), of which extravagance his unfortunate Viscountess knows nothing.

“ (His Majesty will be) eighty-two years of age on his next birthday. The Court prepares to celebrate it with a great feste. Mr. Prior is in a sad way about their refusing at home to send him his plate. All here admired my Lord Viscount's portrait, and said it was a master-piece

of Rigaud. Have you seen it? It is (at the Lady Castlewood's house in Kensington Square). I think no English painter could produce such a piece.

“ Our poor friend the Abbé hath been at the Bastile, but is now transported to the Conciergerie (where his friends may visit him. They are to ask for) a remission of his sentence soon. Let us hope the poor rogue will have repented in prison.

“ (The Lord Castlewood) has had the affair of the plate made up, and departs for England.

“ Is not this a dull letter? I have a cursed headache with drinking with Mat and some more over night, and tipsy or sober am

“ Thine ever ——.”

All this letter, save some dozen of words which I have put above between brackets, was mere idle talk, though the substance of the letter was as important as any letter well could be. It told those that had the key, that *the King will take the Viscount Castlewood's passports and travel to England under that lord's name. His Majesty will be at the Lady Castlewood's house in Ken-*

ington Square, where his friends may visit him ; they are to ask for the Lord Castlewood. This note may have passed under Mr. Prior's eyes, and those of our new allies the French, and taught them nothing ; though it explains sufficiently to persons in London what the event was which was about to happen, as 'twill show those who read my memoirs a hundred years hence, what was that errand on which Colonel Esmond of late had been busy. Silently and swiftly to do that about which others were conspiring, and thousands of Jacobites all over the country, clumsily caballing ; alone to effect that which the leaders here were only talking about ; to bring the Prince of Wales into the country openly in the face of all, under Bolingbroke's very eyes, the walls placarded with the proclamation signed with the Secretary's name, and offering five thousand pounds reward for his apprehension : this was a stroke, the playing and winning of which might well give any adventurous spirit pleasure : the loss of the stake might involve a heavy penalty, but all our family were eager to risk that for the glorious chance of winning the game.

Nor should it be called a game, save perhaps with the chief player, who was not more or less skeptical than most publick men with whom he had acquaintance in that age. (Is there ever a publick man in England that altogether believes in his party? Is there one, however doubtful, that will not fight for it?) Young Frank was ready to fight without much thinking, he was a Jacobite as his father before him was; all the Esmonds were royalists. Give him but the word, he would cry “God save King James,” before the palace guard, or at the May-pole in the Strand; and with respect to the women, as is usual with them, 'twas not a question of party but of faith; their belief was a passion; either Esmond's mistress or her daughter would have died for it cheerfully. I have laughed often, talking of King William's reign, and said I thought Lady Castlewood was disappointed the King did not persecute the family more; and those who know the nature of women, may fancy for themselves, what needs not here be written down, the rapture with which these neophytes received the mystery when made known to them, the eagerness with which they looked forward to

its completion ; the reverence which they paid the minister who initiated them into that secret Truth, now known only to a few, but presently to reign over the world. Sure there is no bound to the trustingness of women. Look at Arria worshipping the drunken clod-pate of a husband who beats her ; look at Cornelia treasuring as a jewel in her maternal heart, the oaf her son ; I have known a woman preach Jesuits' bark, and afterwards Dr. Berkeley's tar-water, as though to swallow them were a divine decree, and to refuse them no better than blasphemy.

On his return from France Colonel Esmond put himself at the head of this little knot of fond conspirators. No death or torture he knew would frighten them out of their constancy. When he detailed his plan for bringing the King back, his elder mistress thought that that Restoration was to be attributed under Heaven to the Castlewood family and to its chief, and she worshipped and loved Esmond, if that could be, more than ever she had done. She doubted not for one moment of the success of his scheme, to mistrust which would have seemed impious in her eyes. And as for Beatrix, when she became

acquainted with the plan, and joined it, as she did with all her heart, she gave Esmond one of her searching bright looks: "Ah, Harry," says she, "why were you not the head of our house? You are the only one fit to raise it; why do you give that silly boy the name and the honour? But 'tis so in the world, those get the prize that don't deserve or care for it. I wish I could give you *your* silly prize, cousin, but I can't; I have tried and I can't." And she went away, shaking her head mournfully, but always, it seemed to Esmond, that her liking and respect for him was greatly increased, since she knew what capability he had both to act and bear; to do and to forego.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORIGINAL OF THE PORTRAIT COMES TO ENGLAND.

‘**T**WAS announced in the family that my Lord Castlewood would arrive, having a confidential French gentleman in his suite who acted as secretary to his lordship, and who being a Papist, and a foreigner of a good family, though now in rather a menial place, would have his meals served in his chamber, and not with the domesticks of the house. The viscountess gave up her bed-chamber contiguous to her daughter’s, and having a large convenient closet attached to it, in which a bed was put up, ostensibly for Monsieur Baptiste, the Frenchman; though, ‘tis needless to say, when the doors of the apartment were locked, and the two guests retired within it, the young viscount became the servant of the illustrious Prince whom he entertained,

and gave up gladly the more convenient and airy chamber and bed to his master. Madam Beatrix also retired to the upper region, her chamber being converted into a sitting-room for my lord. The better to carry the deceit, Beatrix affected to grumble before the servants, and to be jealous that she was turned out of her chamber to make way for my lord.

No small preparations were made, you may be sure, and no slight tremor of expectation caused the hearts of the gentle ladies of Castlewood to flutter, before the arrival of the personages who were about to honour their house. The chamber was ornamented with flowers ; the bed covered with the very finest of linen ; the two ladies insisting on making it themselves, and kneeling down at the bedside and kissing the sheets out of respect for the web that was to hold the sacred person of a King. The toilet was of silver and crystal ; there was a copy of *Eikon-Baslike* laid on the writing-table ; a portrait of the martyred King, hung always over the mantel, having a sword of my poor Lord Castlewood underneath it, and a little picture or emblem which the widow loved always to have

before her eyes on waking, and in which the hair of her lord and her two children was worked together. Her books of private devotions, as they were all of the English Church, she carried away with her to the upper apartment which she destined for herself. The ladies showed Mr. Esmond, when they were completed, the fond preparations they had made. 'Twas then Beatrix knelt down and kissed the linen sheets. As for her mother, Lady Castlewood made a curtsey at the door, as she would have done to the altar on entering a church, and owned that she considered the chamber in a manner sacred.

The company in the servants' hall never for a moment supposed that these preparations were made for any other person than the young viscount, the lord of the house, whom his fond mother had been for so many years without seeing. Both ladies were perfect housewives, having the greatest skill in the making of confections, scented waters, &c., and keeping a notable superintendence over the kitchen. Calves enough were killed to feed an army of prodigal sons, Esmond thought, and laughed when he came to wait on the ladies, on the day when the guests were to arrive, to find

two pairs of the finest and roundest arms to be seen in England (my Lady Castlewood was remarkable for this beauty of her person), covered with flour up above the elbows, and preparing paste, and turning rolling-pins in the housekeeper's closet. The guest would not arrive till supper-time, and my lord would prefer having that meal in his own chamber. You may be sure, the brightest plate of the house was laid out there, and can understand why it was that the ladies insisted that they alone would wait upon the young chief of the family.

Taking horse Colonel Esmond rode rapidly to Rochester, and there awaited the King in that very town where his father had last set his foot on the English shore. A room had been provided at an inn there for my Lord Castlewood and his servant; and Colonel Esmond timed his ride so well that he had scarce been half an hour in the place, and was looking over the balcony into the yard of the inn, when two travellers rode in at the inn-gate, and the Colonel running down, the next moment embraced his dear young lord.

My lord's companion, acting the part of a domesstick, dismounted and was for holding the

viscount's stirrup ; but Colonel Esmond, calling to his own man, who was in the court, bade him take the horses and settle with the lad who had ridden the post along with the two travellers, crying out in a cavalier tone, in the French language to my lord's companion, and affecting to grumble that my lord's fellow was a Frenchman, and did not know the money or habits of the country :—“ My man will see to the horses, Baptiste,” says Colonel Esmond : “ do you understand English ? ” “ Very leetle ? ” “ So, follow my lord and wait upon him at dinner in his own room.” The landlord and his people came up presently bearing the dishes ; 'twas well they made a noise and stir in the gallery, or they might have found Colonel Esmond on his knee before Lord Castlewood's servant, welcoming his Majesty to his kingdom, and kissing the hand of the King. We told the landlord that the Frenchman would wait on his master ; and Esmond's man was ordered to keep sentry in the gallery without the door. The Prince dined with a good appetite, laughing and talking very gaily, and condescendingly bidding his two companions to sit with him at table. He was in

better spirits than poor Frank Castlewood, who Esmond thought might be woe-be-gone on account of parting with his divine Clotilda ; but the prince wishing to take a short siesta after dinner, and retiring to an inner chamber where there was a bed, the cause of poor Frank's discomfiture came out ; and bursting into tears with many expressions of fondness, friendship, and humiliation, the faithful lad gave his kinsman to understand that he now knew all the truth, and the sacrifices which Colonel Esmond had made for him.

Seeing no good in acquainting poor Frank with that secret, Mr. Esmond had entreated his mistress also not to reveal it to her son. The Prince had told the poor lad all as they were riding from Dover : “ I had as lief he had shot me, cousin,” Frank said : “ I knew you were the best, and the bravest, and the kindest of all men (so the enthusiastick young fellow went on) but I never thought I owed you what I do, and can scarce bear the weight of the obligation.”

“ I stand in the place of your father,” says Mr. Esmond kindly, “ and sure a father may dispossess himself in favour of his son. I abdicate

the two-penny crown, and invest you with the kingdom of Brentford: don't be a fool and cry, you make a much taller and handsomer viscount than ever I could." But the fond boy, with oaths and protestations, laughter and incoherent outbreaks of passionate emotion, could not be got, for some little time, to put up with Esmond's raillery; wanted to kneel down to him, and kissed his hand; asked him and implored him, to order him something, to bid Castlewood give his own life up or take somebody else's; anything so that he might show his gratitude for the generosity Esmond showed him.

"The K——, *he* laughed," Frank said, pointing to the door where the sleeper was, and speaking in a low tone, "I don't think he should have laughed as he told me the story. As we rode along from Dover, talking in French, he spoke about you, and your coming to him at Bar; he called you 'le grand sérieux,' Don Bellianis of Greece, and I don't know what names; mimicking your manner (here Castlewood laughed himself)—and he did it very well. He seems to sneer at everything. He is not like a king: somehow, Harry, I fancy

you are like a king. He does not seem to think what a stake we are all playing. He would have stopped at Canterbury to run after a bar-maid there, had I not implored him to come on. He hath a house at Chaillot where he used to go and bury himself for weeks away from the Queen, and with all sorts of bad company," says Frank, with a demure look; "you may smile, but I am not the wild fellow I was; no, no, I have been taught better," says Castlewood, devoutly, making a sign on his breast.

"Thou art my dear brave boy," says Colonel Esmond, touched at the young fellow's simplicity, "and there will be a noble gentleman at Castlewood so long as my Frank is there."

The impetuous young lad was for going down on his knees again, with another explosion of gratitude, but that we heard the voice from the next chamber of the august sleeper, just waking, calling out:—"Eh, La-Fleur, un verre d'eau;" his Majesty came out yawning:—"A pest," says he, "upon your English ale, 'tis so strong that, ma foi, it hath turned my head."

The effect of the ale was like a spur upon our horses, and we rode very quickly to London,

reaching Kensington at nightfall. Mr. Esmond's servant was left behind at Rochester, to take care of the tired horses, whilst we had fresh beasts provided along the road. And galloping by the Prince's side, the Colonel explained to the Prince of Wales what his movements had been ; who the friends were that knew of the expedition ; whom, as Esmond conceived, the Prince should trust ; entreating him, above all, to maintain the very closest secrefy until the time should come when his Royal Highness should appear. The town swarmed with friends of the Prince's cause ; there were scores of correspondents with St. Germains ; Jacobites known and secret ; great in station and humble ; about the Court and the Queen ; in the Parliament, Church, and among the merchants in the City. The Prince had friends numberless in the army, in the Privy-Council, and the Officers of State. The great object, as it seemed, to the small band of persons, who had concerted that bold stroke, who had brought the Queen's brother into his native country, was that his visit should remain unknown, till the proper time came, when his presence should surprise friends and enemies alike ; and

the latter should be found so unprepared and disunited, that they should not find time to attack him. We feared more from his friends than from his enemies. The lies, and tittle-tattle sent over to St. Germain by the Jacobite agents about London, had done an incalculable mischief to his cause, and wofully misguided him, and it was from these especially that the persons engaged in the present venture were anxious to defend the chief actor in it.*

The party reached London by nightfall, leaving their horses at the Posting-house over against Westminster, and being ferried over the water where Lady Esmond's coach was already in waiting. In another hour we were all landed at Kensington, and the mistress of the house had that satisfaction which her heart had yearned after for many years, once more to embrace her son, who, on his side, with all his waywardness, ever retained a most tender affection for his parent.

* The managers were the Bishop, who cannot be hurt by having his name mentioned, a very active and loyal non-Conformist Divine, a lady in the highest favour at Court, with whom Beatrix Esmond had communication, and two noblemen of the greatest rank, and a member of the House of Commons, who was implicated in more transactions than one in behalf of the Stuart family.

She did not refrain from this expression of her feeling, though the domesticks were by, and my Lord Castlewood's attendant stood in the hall. Esmond had to whisper to him in French to take his hat off. Monsieur Baptiste was constantly neglecting his part with an inconceivable levity: more than once on the ride to London, little observations of the stranger, light remarks, and words betokening the greatest ignorance of the country the Prince came to govern, had hurt the susceptibility of the two gentlemen forming his escort; nor could either help owning in his secret mind that they would have had his behaviour otherwise, and that the laughter and the lightness, not to say license, which characterised his talk, scarce befitted such a great Prince and such a solemn occasion. Not but that he could act at proper times with spirit and dignity. He had behaved, as we all knew, in a very courageous manner on the field. Esmond had seen a copy of the letter the Prince writ with his own hand when urged by his friends in England to abjure his religion, and admired that manly and magnanimous reply by which he refused to yield to the temptation. Monsieur Baptiste took off his hat,

blushing at the hint Colonel Esmond ventured to give him, and said :—“Tenez, elle est jolie, la petite mère; Foi-de-Chevalier! elle est charmante; mais l'autre, qui est cette nymphe, cet astre qui brille, cette Diane qui descend sur nous ?” And he started back, and pushed forward, as Beatrix was descending the stair. She was in colours for the first time at her own house; she wore the diamonds Esmond gave her; it had been agreed between them, that she should wear these brilliants on the day when the King should enter the house; and a Queen she looked, radiant in charms, and magnificent and imperial in beauty.

Castlewood himself was startled by that beauty and splendour; he stepped back and gazed at his sister as though he had not been aware before (nor was he very likely) how perfectly lovely she was, and I thought blushed as he embraced her. The Prince could not keep his eyes off her; he quite forgot his menial part, though he had been schooled to it, and a little light portmanteau prepared expressly that he should carry it. He pressed forward before my Lord Viscount. ‘Twas lucky the servants’ eyes were busy in

other directions, or they must have seen that this was no servant, or at least a very insolent and rude one.

Again Colonel Esmond was obliged to cry out “Baptiste,” in a loud imperious voice, “have a care to the valisse ;” at which hint the wilful young man ground his teeth together with something very like a curse between them, and then gave a brief look of anything but pleasure to his Mentor. Being reminded however, he shouldered the little portmanteau, and carried it up the stair, Esmond preceding him, and a servant with lighted tapers. He flung down his burden sulkily in the bed-chamber :—“A Prince that will wear a crown must wear a mask,” says Mr. Esmond, in French.

“Ah, peste ; I see how it is,” says Monsieur Baptiste, continuing the talk in French. “The Great Serious is seriously”—“alarmed for Monsieur Baptiste,” broke in the Colonel. Esmond neither liked the tone with which the Prince spoke of the ladies, nor the eyes with which he regarded them.

The bed-chamber and the two rooms adjoining it, the closet and the apartment which was to be

called my lord's parlour, were already lighted and awaiting their occupier; and the collation laid for my lord's supper. Lord Castlewood and his mother and sister came up the stair a minute afterwards, and so soon as the domesticks had quitted the apartment, Castlewood and Esmond uncovered, and the two ladies went down on their knees before the Prince, who graciously gave a hand to each. He looked his part of Prince much more naturally than that of servant, which he had just been trying, and raised them both with a great deal of nobility, as well as kindness in his air. "Madam," says he, "my mother will thank your ladyship for your hospitality to her son: for you, madam," turning to Beatrix, "I cannot bear to see so much beauty in such a posture. You will betray Monsieur Baptiste if you kneel to him; sure 'tis his place rather to kneel to you."

A light shone out of her eyes; a gleam bright enough to kindle passion in any breast. There were times when this creature was so handsome, that she seemed, as it were, like Venus revealing herself a goddess in a flash of brightness. She appeared so now; radiant, and with eyes bright

with a wonderful lustre. A pang, as of rage and jealousy, shot through Esmond's heart, as he caught the look she gave the Prince; and he clenched his hand involuntarily and looked across to Castlewood, whose eyes answered his alarm-signal, and were also on the alert. The Prince gave his subjects an audience of a few minutes, and then the two ladies and Colonel Esmond quitted the chamber. Lady Castlewood pressed his hand as they descended the stair, and the three went down to the lower rooms, where they waited awhile till the travellers above should be refreshed and ready for their meal.

Esmond looked at Beatrix, blazing with her jewels on her beautiful neck. "I have kept my word," says he: "And I mine," says Beatrix, looking down on the diamonds.

"Were I the Mogul Emperor," says the Colonel, "you should have all that were dug out of Golconda."

"These are a great deal too good for me," says Beatrix, dropping her head on her beautiful breast,—"so are you all, all:" and when she looked up again, as she did in a moment, and after a sigh, her eyes, as they gazed at her cousin,

wore that melancholy and inscrutable look which 'twas always impossible to sound.

When the time came for the supper, of which we were advertised by a knocking overhead, Colonel Esmond and the two ladies went to the upper apartment, where the Prince already was, and by his side the young viscount, of exactly the same age, shape, and with features not dissimilar, though Frank's were the handsomer of the two. The Prince sat down, and bade the ladies sit. The gentlemen remained standing ; there was, indeed, but one more cover laid at the table :—“ Which of you will take it ? ” says he.

“ The head of our house,” says Lady Castlewood, taking her son's hand, and looking towards Colonel Esmond with a bow and a great tremor of the voice ; “ the Marquis of Esmond will have the honour of serving the King.”

“ I shall have the honour of waiting on his Royal Highness,” says Colonel Esmond, filling a cup of wine, and, as the fashion of that day was, he presented it to the King on his knee.

“ I drink to my hostess and her family,” says the Prince, with no very well pleased air ; but the cloud passed immediately off his face, and he

talked to the ladies in a lively, rattling strain, quite undisturbed by poor Mr. Esmond's yellow countenance, that I dare say looked very glum.

When the time came to take leave, Esmond marched homewards to his lodgings, and met Mr. Addison on the road that night, walking to a cottage he had at Fulham, the moon shining on his handsome, serene face :—“ What cheer, brother,” says Addison, laughing, “ I thought it was a foot-pad advancing in the dark, and behold 'tis an old friend. We may shake hands, Colonel, in the dark, 'tis better than fighting by daylight. Why should we quarrel, because I am a Whig and thou art a Tory ? Turn thy steps and walk with me to Fulham, where there is a nightingale still singing in the garden, and a cool bottle in a cave I know of ; you shall drink to the Pretender if you like, and I will drink my liquor my own way : I have had enough of good liquor ?—no, never ! There is no such word as enough, as a stopper for good wine. Thou wilt not come ? Come any day, come sooon. You know I remember Simois and the Sigeia tellus, and the prœlia mixta mero, mixta mero,” he repeated, with ever so slight a touch of *merum* in his voice,

and walked back a little way on the road with Esmond, bidding the other remember he was always his friend, and indebted to him for his aid in the “Campaign” poem. And very likely Mr. Under Secretary would have stepped in and taken ’tother bottle at the Colonel’s lodging, had the latter invited him, but Esmond’s mood was none of the gayest, and he bade his friend an inhospitable good night at the door.

“ I have done the deed,” thought he, sleepless, and looking out into the night; “ he is here, and I have brought him; he and Beatrix are sleeping under the same roof now. Whom did I mean to serve in bringing him? Was it the Prince? was it Henry Esmond? Had I not best have joined the manly creed of Addison yonder, that scouts the old doctrine of right divine, that boldly declares that Parliament and people consecrate the Sovereign, not Bishops nor genealogies, nor oils, nor coronations.” The eager gaze of the young Prince watching every movement of Beatrix, haunted Esmond and pursued him. The Prince’s figure appeared before him in his feverish dreams many times that night. He wished the deed undone, for which he had laboured.

so. He was not the first that has regretted his own act, or brought about his own undoing. Undoing? Should he write that word in his late years? No, on his knees before Heaven, rather be thankful for what then he deemed his misfortune, and which hath caused the whole subsequent happiness of his life.

Esmond's man, honest John Lockwood, had served his master and the family all his life, and the Colonel knew that he could answer for John's fidelity as for his own. John returned with the horses from Rochester betimes the next morning, and the Colonel gave him to understand that on going to Kensington, where he was free of the servants' hall, and, indeed, courting Mrs. Beatrix's maid, he was to ask no questions, and betray no surprise, but to vouch stoutly that the young gentleman he should see in a red coat there was my Lord Viscount Castlewood, and that his attendant in grey, was Monsieur Baptiste the Frenchman. He was to tell his friends in the kitchen such stories as he remembered of my Lord Viscount's youth at Castlewood; what a wild boy he was; how he used to drill Jack and cane him, before ever he was a soldier, everything,

in fine, he knew respecting my Lord Viscount's early days. Jack's ideas of painting had not been much cultivated during his residence in Flanders with his master ; and before my young lord's return, he had been easily got to believe that the picture brought over from Paris, and now hanging in Lady Castlewood's drawing-room, was a perfect likeness of her son the young lord. And the domesticks having all seen the picture many times, and catching but a momentary imperfect glimpse of the two strangers on the night of their arrival, never had a reason to doubt the fidelity of the portrait ; and next day, when they saw the original of the piece habited exactly as he was represented in the painting, with the same perriwig, ribands, and uniform of the Guard, quite naturally addressed the gentleman as my Lord Castlewood, my Lady Viscountess's son.

The secretary of the night previous, was now the viscount ; the viscount wore the secretary's grey frock ; and John Lockwood was instructed to hint to the world below stairs that my lord being a papist, and very devout in that religion, his attendant might be no other than his chaplain

from Bruxelles ; hence, if he took his meals in my lord's company there was little reason for surprise. Frank was further cautioned to speak English with a foreign accent, which task he performed indifferently well, and this caution was the more necessary because the Prince himself scarce spoke our language like a native of the island ; and John Lockwood laughed with the folks below stairs at the manner in which my lord, after five years abroad, sometimes forgot his own tongue and spoke it like a Frenchman : “ I warrant,” says he, “ that with the English beef and beer, his lordship will soon get back the proper use of his mouth ; ” and to do his new lordship justice, he took to beer and beef very kindly.

The Prince drank so much, and was so loud and imprudent in his talk after his drink, that Esmond often trembled for him. His meals were served as much as possible in his own chamber, though frequently he made his appearance in Lady Castlewood's parlour and drawing-room, calling Beatrix “ sister,” and her ladyship “ mother,” or “ madam,” before the servants. And choosing to act entirely up to the part of

brother and son, the Prince sometimes saluted Mrs. Beatrix and Lady Castlewood with a freedom which his secretary did not like, and which, for his part, set Colonel Esmond tearing with rage.

The guests had not been three days in the house when poor Jack Lockwood came with a rueful countenance to his master, and said : “ My lord, that is—the gentleman, has been tampering with Mrs. Lucy (Jack’s sweetheart), and given her guineas and a kiss.” I fear that Colonel Esmond’s mind was rather relieved, than otherwise, when he found that the ancillary beauty was the one whom the Prince had selected. His royal tastes were known to lie that way, and continued so in after life. The heir of one of the greatest names, of the greatest kingdoms, and of the greatest misfortunes in Europe, was often content to lay the dignity of his birth and grief at the wooden shoes of a French chamber-maid, and to repent afterwards (for he was very devout), in ashes taken from the dust-pan. ’Tis for mortals such as these, that nations suffer, that parties struggle, that warriors fight and bleed. A year afterwards gallant heads were falling, and

Nithsdale in escape, and Derwentwater on the scaffold, whilst the heedless ingrate, for whom they risked and lost all, was tippling with his seraglio of mistresses in his *petite maison* of Chaillot.

Blushing to be forced to bear such an errand, Esmond had to go to the Prince and warn him that the girl whom his Highness was bribing, was John Lockwood's sweetheart, an honest resolute man who had served in six campaigns, and feared nothing, and who knew that the person, calling himself Lord Castlewood, was not his young master: and the Colonel besought the Prince to consider, what the effect of a single man's jealousy might be, and to think of other designs he had in hand, more important than the seduction of a waiting-maid, and the humiliation of a brave man.

Ten times, perhaps, in the course of as many days, Mr. Esmond had to warn the royal young adventurer of some imprudence or some freedom. He received these remonstrances very testily, save perhaps in this affair of poor Lockwood's, when he deigned to burst out a-laughing, and said, "What! the *soubrette* has peached to the

amoureux, and Crispin is angry, and Crispin has served, and Crispin has been a corporal, has he? Tell him we will reward his valour with a pair of colours, and recompense his fidelity.”

Colonel Esmond ventured to utter some other words of entreaty, but the Prince, stamping imperiously, cried out, “Avez, milord: je m’ennuye à la prêche; I am not come to London to go to the sermon.” And he complained afterwards to Castlewood that “le petit jaune, le noir Colonel, le Marquis Misanthrope (by which facetious names his Royal Highness was pleased to designate Colonel Esmond), fatigued him with his grand airs and virtuous homilies.”

The Bishop of Rochester, and other gentlemen, engaged in the transaction which had brought the Prince over, waited upon his Royal Highness, constantly asking for my Lord Castlewood on their arrival at Kensington, and being openly conducted to his Royal Highness in that character, who received them either in my lady’s drawing-room below, or above in his own apartment; and all implored him to quit the house as little as possible, and to wait there till the signal should be given for him to appear. The ladies

entertained him at cards, over which amusement he spent many hours in each day and night. He passed many hours more in drinking, during which time he would rattle and talk very agreeably, and especially if the Colonel was absent, whose presence always seemed to frighten him ; and the poor “Colonel Noir” took that hint as a command accordingly, and seldom intruded his black face upon the convivial hours of this august young prisoner. Except for those few persons of whom the porter had the list, Lord Castlewood was denied to all friends of the house who waited on his lordship. The wound he had received had broke out again from his journey on horseback, so the world and the domesticks were informed. And Doctor A——,* his physician, (I shall not mention his name, but he was physician to the queen, of the Scots nation, and a man remarkable for his benevolence as well as his wit), gave orders that he should be kept perfectly quiet until the wound should heal. With this gentleman, who was one of the most active and influential of our party, and the others

* There can be very little doubt, that the Doctor mentioned by my dear father, was the famous Dr. Arbuthnot.—R. E. W.

before spoken of, the whole secret lay ; and it was kept with so much faithfulness, and the story we told so simple and natural, that there was no likelihood of a discovery except from the imprudence of the Prince himself, and an adventurous levity that we had the greatest difficulty to controul. As for Lady Castlewood, although she scarce spoke a word, 'twas easy to gather from her demeanour, and one or two hints she dropped, how deep her mortification was at finding the hero whom she had chosen to worship all her life (and whose restoration had formed almost the most sacred part of her prayers), no more than a man, and not a good one. She thought misfortune might have chastened him ; but that instructress had rather rendered him callous than humble. His devotion, which was quite real, kept him from no sin he had a mind to. His talk shewed good-humour, gaiety, even wit enough ; but there was a levity in his acts and words that he had brought from among those libertine devotees with whom he had been bred, and that shocked the simplicity and purity of the English lady, whose guest he was. Esmond spoke his mind to Beatrix pretty freely about the Prince,

getting her brother too to put in a word of warning. Beatrix was entirely of their opinion ; she thought he was very light, very light and reckless : she could not even see the good looks Colonel Esmond had spoken of. The Prince had bad teeth, and a decided squint. How could we say he did not squint ? His eyes were fine, but there was certainly a cast in them. She rallied him at table with wonderful wit ; she spoke of him invariably as of a mere boy ; she was more fond of Esmond than ever, praised him to her brother, praised him to the Prince, when his Royal Highness was pleased to sneer at the Colonel, and warmly espoused his cause : “ And if your Majesty does not give him the Garter his father had, when the Marquis of Esmond comes to your Majesty’s court, I will hang myself in my own garters, or will cry my eyes out.” “ Rather than lose those,” says the Prince, “ he shall be made Archbishop and Colonel of the Guard” (it was Frank Castlewood who told me of this conversation over their supper).

“ Yes,” cries she with one of her laughs, I fancy I hear it now. Thirty years afterwards I hear

that delightful musick ; “ yes, he shall be Archbishop of Esmond and Marquis of Canterbury.”

“ And what will your ladyship be ? ” says the Prince ; “ you have but to choose your place.”

“ I, ” says Beatrix, “ will be mother of the maids to the Queen of his Majesty King James the Third—*Vive le Roy !* ” and she made him a great curtsey, and drank a part of a glass of wine in his honour.

“ The Prince seized hold of the glass and drank the last drop of it, ” Castlewood said, “ and my mother, looking very anxious, rose up and asked leave to retire. But that Trix is my mother’s daughter, Harry, ” Frank continued, “ I don’t know what a horrid fear I should have of her. I wish—I wish this business were over. You are older than I am, and wiser, and better, and I owe you everything, and would die for you—before George I would ; but I wish the end of this were come.”

Neither of us very likely passed a tranquil night ; horrible doubts and torments racked Esmond’s soul ; ’twas a scheme of personal ambition, a daring stroke for a selfish end,—he knew it. What cared he, in his heart, who was King ?

Were not his very sympathies and secret convictions on the other side—on the side of People, Parliament, Freedom? And here was he, engaged for a Prince that had scarce heard the word liberty; that priests, and women, tyrants by nature both, made a tool of. The Misanthrope was in no better humour after hearing that story, and his grim face more black and yellow than ever.

CHAPTER X.



WE ENTERTAIN A VERY DISTINGUISHED GUEST AT
KENSINGTON.

SHOULD any clue be found to the dark intrigues at the latter end of Queen Anne's time, or any historian be inclined to follow it, 'twill be discovered, I have little doubt, that not one of the great personages about the Queen had a defined scheme of policy, independent of that private and selfish interest, which each was bent on pursuing ; St. John was for St. John, and Harley for Oxford, and Marlborough for John Churchill, always ; and according as they could get help from St. Germains or Hannover, they sent over proffers of allegiance to the Princes there, or betrayed one to the other ; one cause, or one sovereign, was as good as another to them, so that they could hold the best place under him ; and like Lockit and Peachem, the Newgate

chiefs in the Rogues' Opera Mr. Gay wrote afterwards, had each in his hand documents and proofs of treason which would hang the other, only he did not dare to use the weapon, for fear of that one which his neighbour also carried in his pocket. Think of the great Marlborough, the greatest subject in all the world, a conqueror of princes, that had marched victorious over Germany, Flanders, and France, that had given the law to Sovereigns abroad, and been worshipped as a divinity at home, forced to sneak out of England,—his credit, honours, palaces, all taken from him; his friends in the army broke and ruined; and flying before Harley, as abject and powerless as a poor debtor before a bailiff with a writ. A paper, of which Harley got possession, and showing beyond doubt that the Duke was engaged with the Stuart family, was the weapon with which the Treasurer drove Marlborough out of the kingdom. He fled to Antwerp, and began intriguing instantly on the other side, and came back to England, as all know, a Whig and a Hannoverian.

Though the Treasurer turned out of the army and office every man, military or civil, known to

be the Duke's friend, and gave the vacant posts among the Tory party ; he, too, was playing the double game between Hannover and St. Germains, awaiting the expected catastrophe of the Queen's death to be Master of the State, and offer it to either family that should bribe him best, or that the nation should declare for. Whichever the King was, Harley's object was to reign over him ; and to this end he supplanted the former famous favourite, decried the actions of the war which had made Marlborough's name illustrious, and disdained no more than the great fallen competitor of his, the meanest arts, flatteries, intimidations, that would secure his power. If the greatest satirist the world ever hath seen, had writ against Harley, and not for him, what a history had he left behind of the last years of Queen Anne's reign ! But Swift, that scorned all mankind, and himself not the least of all, had this merit of a faithful partisan, that he loved those chiefs who treated him well, and stuck by Harley bravely in his fall, as he gallantly had supported him in his better fortune.

Incomparably more brilliant, more splendid, eloquent, accomplished, than his rival, the great

St. John could be as selfish as Oxford was, and could act the double part as skilfully as ambidextrous Churchill. He whose talk was always of liberty, no more shrunk from using persecution and the pillory against his opponents, than if he had been at Lisbon and Grand Inquisitor. This lofty patriot was on his knees at Hannover and St. Germain too; notoriously of no religion, he toasted Church and Queen as boldly as the stupid Sacheverel, whom he used and laughed at; and to serve his turn, and to overthrow his enemy, he could intrigue, coax, bully, wheedle, fawn on the Court-favourite and creep up the back-stair as silently as Oxford who supplanted Marlborough, and whom he himself supplanted. The crash of my Lord Oxford happened at this very time, whereat my history is now arrived. He was come to the very last days of his power, and the agent whom he employed to overthrow the conqueror of Blenheim, was now engaged to upset the conqueror's conqueror, and hand over the staff of government to Bolingbroke, who had been panting to hold it.

In expectation of the stroke that was now

preparing, the Irish regiments in the French service were all brought round about Boulogne in Picardy, to pass over if need were, with the Duke of Berwick ; the soldiers of France no longer, but subjects of James the Third of England and Ireland King. The fidelity of the great mass of the Scots (though a most active, resolute, and gallant Whig party, admirably and energetically ordered and disciplined, was known to be in Scotland too), was notoriously unshaken in their King. A very great body of Tory clergy, nobility, and gentry, were publick partisans of the exiled Prince ; and the indifferents might be counted on to cry King George or King James, according as either should prevail. The Queen, especially in her latter days, inclined towards her own family. The Prince was lying actually in London, within a stone's-throw of his sister's palace ; the first minister toppling to his fall, and so tottering that the weakest push of a woman's finger would send him down ; and as for Bolingbroke, his successor, we know on whose side his power and his splendid eloquence would be on the day when the Queen should appear openly before her council and say :—“ This, my

lords, is my brother, here is my father's heir, and mine after me."

During the whole of the previous year the Queen had had many and repeated fits of sickness, fever and lethargy, and her death had been constantly looked for by all her attendants. The Elector of Hanover had wished to send his son, the Duke of Cambridge,—to pay his court to his cousin the Queen, the Elector said :—in truth, to be on the spot when death should close her career. Frightened perhaps to have such a memento mori under her royal eyes, her Majesty had angrily forbidden the young Prince's coming into England. Either she desired to keep the chances for her brother open yet; or the people about her did not wish to close with the Whig candidate till they could make terms with him. The quarrels of her ministers before her face at the Council board, the pricks of conscience very likely, the importunities of her ministers, and constant turmoil and agitation round about her, had weakened and irritated the Princess extremely; her strength was giving way under these continual trials of her temper, and from day to day it was expected she must come to a speedy end of them.

Just before Viscount Castlewood and his companion came from France her Majesty was taken ill. The St. Anthony's fire broke out on the Royal legs ; there was no hurry for the presentation of the young lord at Court, or that person who should appear under his name ; and my Lord Viscount's wound breaking out opportunely, he was kept conveniently in his chamber until such time as his physician should allow him to bend his knee before the Queen. At the commencement of July, that influential lady with whom it has been mentioned that our party had relations, came frequently to visit her young friend, the Maid of Honour, at Kensington, and my Lord Viscount (the real or supposititious), who was an invalid at Lady Castlewood's house.

On the 27th day of July, the lady in question, who held the most intimate post about the Queen, came in her chair from the Palace hard by, bringing to the little party in Kensington Square intelligence of the very highest importance. The final blow had been struck, and my Lord of Oxford and Mortimer was no longer Treasurer. The staff was as yet given to no successor, though my Lord Bolingbroke would

undoubtedly be the man. And now the time was come, the Queen's Abigail said: and now my Lord Castlewood ought to be presented to the Sovereign.

After that scene which Lord Castlewood witnessed and described to his cousin, who passed such a miserable night of mortification and jealousy as he thought over the transaction; no doubt the three persons who were set by nature as protectors over Beatrix came to the same conclusion, that she must be removed from the presence of a man whose desires towards her were expressed only too clearly; and who was no more scrupulous in seeking to gratify them than his father had been before him. I suppose Esmond's mistress, her son, and the Colonel himself, had been all secretly debating this matter in their minds, for when Frank broke out, in his blunt way, with—"I think Beatrix had best be any where but here,"—Lady Castlewood said—"I thank you, Frank, I have thought so too;" and Mr. Esmond, though he only remarked that it was not for him to speak, showed plainly by the delight on his countenance, how very agreeable that proposal was to him.

“One sees that you think with us, Henry,” says the viscountess with ever so little of sarcasm in her tone: “Beatrix is best out of this house whilst we have our guest in it, and as soon as this morning’s business is done, she ought to quit London.”

“What morning’s business?” asked Colonel Esmond, not knowing what had been arranged, though in fact the stroke next in importance to that of bringing the Prince, and of having him acknowledged by the Queen, was now being performed at the very moment we three were conversing together.

The Court-lady with whom our plan was concerted, and who was a chief agent in it, the Court-physician, and the Bishop of Rochester, who were the other two most active participants in our plan, had held many councils in our house at Kensington and elsewhere, as to the means best to be adopted for presenting our young adventurer to his sister the Queen. The simple and easy plan proposed by Colonel Esmond had been agreed to by all parties, which was that on some rather private day when there were not many persons about the Court, the Prince should

appear there as my Lord Castlewood, should be greeted by his sister-in-waiting, and led by that Other Lady into the closet of the Queen. And according to her Majesty's health or humour, and the circumstances that might arise during the interview; it was to be left to the discretion of those present at it, and to the Prince himself, whether he should declare that it was the Queen's own brother, or the brother of Beatrix Esmond, who kissed her Royal hand. And this plan being determined on, we were all waiting in very much anxiety for the day and signal of execution.

Two mornings after that supper, it being the 27th day of July, the Bishop of Rochester breaking fast with Lady Castlewood and her family, and the meal scarce over, Doctor A.'s coach drove up to our house at Kensington, and the Doctor appeared amongst the party there, enlivening a rather gloomy company, for the mother and daughter had had words in the morning in respect to the transactions of that supper and other adventures perhaps, and on the day succeeding. Beatrix's haughty spirit brooked remonstrances from no superior, much less from her mother, the gentlest of creatures, whom the

girl commanded rather than obeyed. And feeling she was wrong, and that by a thousand coquetties (which she could no more help exercising on every man that came near her, than the sun can help shining on great and small,) she had provoked the Prince's dangerous admiration, and allured him to the expression of it; she was only the more wilful and imperious, the more she felt her error.

To this party, the Prince being served with chocolate in his bed-chamber where he lay late sleeping away the fumes of his wine, the Doctor came, and by the urgent and startling nature of his news dissipated instantly that private and minor unpleasantries under which the family of Castlewood was labouring.

He asked for the Guest; the Guest was above in his own apartment: he bade *Monsieur Baptiste* go up to his master instantly, and requested that *My Lord Viscount Castlewood* would straightway put his uniform on, and come away in the Doctor's coach now at the door.

He then informed Madame Beatrix what her part of the comedy was to be:—"In half an hour," says he, "her Majesty and her favourite

lady will take the air in the Cedar-walk behind the New Banqueting-house. Her Majesty will be drawn in a garden-chair, Madam Beatrix Esmond and *her brother my Lord Viscount Castlewood* will be walking in the private garden (here is Lady Masham's key), and will come unawares upon the Royal party. The man that draws the chair will retire, and leave the Queen, the favourite and the Maid of Honour, and her brother together; Mrs. Beatrix will present her brother, and then! —and then, my Lord Bishop will pray for the result of the interview, and his Scots clerk will say Amen! Quick, put on your hood, Madam Beatrix; why doth not his Majesty come down? Such another chance may not present itself for months again."

The Prince was late and lazy, and indeed had all but lost that chance through his indolence. The Queen was actually about to leave the garden just when the party reached it, the Doctor, the Bishop, the Maid of Honour and her brother went off together in the physician's coach, and had been gone half-an-hour when Colonel Esmond came to Kensington Square.

The news of this errand, on which Beatrix

was gone, of course for a moment put all thoughts of private jealousy out of Colonel Esmond's head. In half an hour more the coach returned; the Bishop descended from it first, and gave his arm to Beatrix, who now came out. His lordship went back into the carriage again, and the Maid of Honour entered the house alone. We were all gazing at her from the upper window, trying to read from her countenance the result of the interview from which she had just come.

She came into the drawing-room in a great tremour and very pale; she asked for a glass of water as her mother went to meet her, and after drinking that and putting off her hood, she began to speak:—“We may all hope for the best,” says she; “it has cost the Queen a fit. Her Majesty was in her chair, in the Cedar-walk, accompanied only by Lady —, when we entered by the private wicket from the west side of the garden, and turned towards her, the Doctor following us. They waited in a side-walk hidden by the shrubs, as we advanced towards the chair. My heart throbbed so I scarce could speak; but my Prince whispered, ‘Courage,

Beatrix ;' and marched on with a steady step. His face was a little flushed, but he was not afraid of the danger. He who fought so bravely at Malplaquet fears nothing." Esmond and Castlewood looked at each other, at this compliment, neither liking the sound of it.

" The Prince uncovered," Beatrix continued, " and I saw the Queen turning round to Lady Masham, as if asking who these two were. Her Majesty looked very pale and ill, and then flushed up ; the favourite made us a signal to advance, and I went up leading my Prince by the hand, quite close to the chair : ' Your Majesty will give my Lord Viscount your hand to kiss,' says her lady, and the Queen put out her hand, which the Prince kissed, kneeling on his knee, he who should kneel to no mortal man or woman.

" ' You have been long from England, my lord,' says the Queen : ' why were you not here to give a home to your mother and sister ? '

" ' I am come, Madam, to stay now, if the Queen desires me,' says the Prince, with another low bow.

" ' You have taken a foreign wife, my lord,

and a foreign religion ; was not that of England good enough for you ?'

" 'In returning to my father's church,' says the Prince, 'I do not love my mother the less, nor am I the less faithful servant of your Majesty.'

" Here," says Beatrix, " the favourite gave me a little signal with her hand to fall back, which I did, though I died to hear what should pass ; and whispered something to the Queen, which made her Majesty start and utter one or two words in a hurried manner, looking towards the Prince, and catching hold with her hand of the arm of her chair. He advanced still nearer towards it ; he began to speak very rapidly ; I caught the words : ' Father, blessing, forgiveness,'—and then presently the Prince fell on his knees ; took from his breast a paper he had there, handed it to the Queen, who, as soon as she saw it, flung up both her arms with a scream, and took away that hand nearest the Prince, and which he endeavoured to kiss. He went on speaking with great animation of gesture, now clasping his hands together on his heart, now opening them, as though to say : ' I am here, your brother, in your power.' Lady Masham

ran round on the other side of the chair, kneeling too, and speaking with great energy. She clasped the Queen's hand on her side, and picked up the paper her Majesty had let fall. The Prince rose and made a further speech as though he would go ; the favourite on the other hand urging her mistress, and then running back to the Prince brought him back once more close to the chair. Again he knelt down and took the Queen's hand, which she did not withdraw, kissing it a hundred times ; my lady all the time, with sobs and supplications, speaking over the chair. This while the Queen sat with a stupified look, crumpling the paper with one hand, as my Prince embraced the other : then of a sudden she uttered several piercing shrieks, and burst into a great fit of hysterick tears and laughter. 'Enough, enough, sir, for this time,' I heard Lady Masham say ; and the chairman, who had withdrawn round the Banqueting-room, came back, alarmed by the cries : 'Quick,' says Lady Masham, 'get some help, and I ran towards the Doctor, who, with the Bishop of Rochester, came up instantly. Lady Masham whispered the Prince he might hope for the very best ; and to be ready to-morrow ; and

he hath gone away to the Bishop of Rochester's house, to meet several of his friends there. And so the great stroke is struck," says Beatrix, going down on her knees, and clasping her hands, "God save the King : God save the King."

Beatrix's tale told, and the young lady herself calmed somewhat of her agitation, we asked with regard to the Prince, who was absent with Bishop Atterbury, and were informed that 'twas likely he might remain abroad the whole day. Beatrix's three kinsfolk looked at one another at this intelligence ; 'twas clear the same thought was passing through the minds of all.

But who should begin to break the news ? Monsieur Baptiste, that is Frank Castlewood, turned very red, and looked towards Esmond ; the Colonel bit his lips, and fairly beat a retreat into the window : it was Lady Castlewood that opened upon Beatrix with the news which we knew would do anything but please her.

"We are glad," says she, taking her daughter's hand, and speaking in a gentle voice, "that the guest is away."

Beatrix drew back in an instant, looking round her at us three, and as if divining a danger.

“ Why glad ? ” says she, her breast beginning to heave ; “ are you so soon tired of him ? ”

“ We think one of us is devilishly too fond of him,” cries out Frank Castlewood.

“ And which is it—you, my lord, or is it mamma, who is jealous because he drinks my health ? or is it the head of the family (here she turned with an imperious look towards Colonel Esmond) who has taken of late to preach the King sermons.”

“ We do not say you are too free with his Majesty.”

“ I thank you, madam,” says Beatrix, with a toss of the head and a curtsey.

But her mother continued with very great calmness and dignity—“ At least we have not said so, though we might, were it possible for a mother to say such words to her own daughter, your father’s daughter.”

“ *Eh ! mon père,* ” breaks out Beatrix, “ was no better than other persons’ fathers ; ” and again she looked towards the Colonel.

We all felt a shock as she uttered those two or three French words ; her manner was exactly imitated from that of our foreign guest.

“ You had not learned to speak French a month ago, Beatrix,” says her mother, sadly, “ nor to speak ill of your father.”

Beatrix, no doubt, saw that slip she had made in her flurry, for she blushed crimson: “ I have learnt to honour the King,” says she, drawing up, “ and ’twere as well that others suspected neither his Majesty nor me.”

“ If you respected your mother a little more,” Frank said, “ Trix, you would do yourself no hurt.”

“ I am no child,” says she, turning round on him; “ we have lived very well these five years without the benefit of your advice or example, and I intend to take neither now. Why does not the head of the house speak?” she went on; “ he rules everything here; when his chaplain has done singing the psalms, will his lordship deliver the sermon? I am tired of the psalms.” The Prince had used almost the very same words in regard to Colonel Esmond, that the imprudent girl repeated in her wrath.

“ You show yourself a very apt scholar, madam,” says the Colonel; and turning to his mistress: “ Did your guest use these words in your

ladyship's hearing, or was it to Beatrix in private that he was pleased to impart his opinion regarding my tiresome sermon ? ”

“ Have you seen him alone ? ” cries my lord, starting up with an oath : “ by God, have you seen him alone ? ”

“ Were he here, you wouldn't dare so to insult me ; no, you would not dare ! ” cries Frank's sister. “ Keep your oaths, my lord, for your wife ; we are not used here to such language. 'Till you came, there used to be kindness between me and mamma, and I cared for her when you never did ; when you were away for years with your horses, and your mistress, and your popish wife.”

“ By ——, ” says my lord, rapping out another oath, “ Clotilda is an angel ; how dare you say a word against Clotilda ? ”

Colonel Esmond could not refrain from a smile, to see how easy Frank's attack was drawn off by that feint :—“ I fancy Clotilda is not the subject in hand, ” says Mr. Esmond, rather scornfully ; “ her ladyship is at Paris, a hundred leagues off, preparing baby-linen. It is about my Lord Castlewood's sister, and not his wife, the question is.”

“ He is not my Lord Castlewood,” says Beatrix, “ and he knows he is not ; he is Colonel Francis Esmond’s son, and no more, and he wears a false title ; and he lives on another man’s land, and he knows it.” Here was another desperate sally of the poor beleaguered garrison, and an alerte in another quarter. “ Again, I beg your pardon,” says Esmond ; “ if there are no proofs of my claim, I have no claim. If my father acknowledged no heir, yours was his lawful successor, and my Lord Castlewood hath as good a right to his rank and small estate as any man in England. But that again is not the question, as you know very well : let us bring our talk back to it, as you will have me meddle in it. And I will give you frankly my opinion, that a house where a Prince lies all day, who respects no woman, is no house for a young unmarried lady ; that you were better in the country than here ; that he is here on a great end, from which no folly should divert him : and that having nobly done your part of this morning, Beatrix, you should retire off the scene awhile, and leave it to the other actors of the play.”

As the Colonel spoke with a perfect calmness

and politenes, such as 'tis to be hoped he hath always shwon to women,* his mistress stood by him one side of the table, and Frank Castlewood on the other hemming in poor Beatrix, that was behind it, and as it were, surrounding her with our approaches.

Having twice fallied out, and been beaten back, she now, as I expected, tried the *ultima ratio* of women, and had recourse to tears. Her beautiful eyes filled with them; I never could bear in her, nor in any woman, that expression of pain:—"I am alone," sobbed she; "you are three against me, my brother, my mother, and

* My dear father faith quite truly that his manner towards our sex was uniformly courteous. From my infancy upwards, he treated me with an extreme gentlenes, as though I was a little lady. I can scarce remember (though I tried him often) ever hearing a rough word from him, nor was he leſ grave and kind in his manner to the humbleſt negresses on his estate. He was familiar with no one except my mother, and it was delightful to witnes up to the very laſt days the confidence between them. He was obeyed eagerly by all under him; and my mother and all her household lived in a constant emulation to please him, and quite a terror leſt in any way they should offend him. He was the humbleſt man, with all this; the laſt exacting, the moſt easily contented; and Mr. Benson, our minister at Castlewood, who attended him at the laſt, ever said—"I know not what Colonel Esmond's doctrine was, but his life and death were those of a devout Christian."—R. E. W.

you. What have I done, that you should speak and look so unkindly at me? Is it my fault that the Prince should, as you say, admire me? Did I bring him here? Did I do aught but what you bade me, in making him welcome? Did you not tell me that our duty was to die for him? Did you not teach me, mother, night and morning, to pray for the King, before even ourselves? What would you have of me, cousin, for you are the chief of the conspiracy against me; I know you are, sir, and that my mother and brother are acting but as you bid them; whither would you have me go?"

"I would but remove from the Prince," says Esmond, gravely, "a dangerous temptation; Heaven forbid I should say you would yield: I would only have him free of it. Your honour needs no guardian, please God, but his imprudence doth. He is so far removed from all women by his rank, that his pursuit of them cannot but be unlawful. We would remove the dearest and fairest of our family from the chance of that insult, and that is why we would have you go, dear Beatrix."

"Harry speaks like a book," says Frank, with

one of his oaths, “and by —, every word he faith is true. You can’t help being handsome, Trix, no more can the Prince help following you. My counsel is that you go out of harm’s way ; for, by the Lord, were the Prince to play any tricks with you, King as he is, or is to be, Harry Esmond and I would have justice of him.”

“Are not two such champions enough to guard me?” says Beatrix, something sorrowfully ; “sure, with you two watching, no evil could happen to me.”

“In faith, I think not, Beatrix,” says Colonel Esmond ; “nor if the Prince knew us would he try.”

“But does he know you ?” interposed Lady Esmond, very quiet ; “he comes of a country where the pursuit of kings is thought no dis-honour to a woman : let us go, dearest Beatrix. Shall we go to Walcote or to Castlewood ? We are best away from the city ; and when the Prince is acknowledged, and our champions have re-stored him, and he hath his own house at Saint James’s or Windsor, we can come back to ours here. Do you not think so, Harry and Frank ?”

Frank and Harry thought with her, you may be sure.

“ We will go, then,” says Beatrix, turning a little pale; “ Lady Masham is to give me warning to-night how her Majesty is, and to-morrow”—

“ I think we had best go to-day, my dear,” says my Lady Castlewood; “ we might have the coach, and sleep at Hounslow, and reach home to-morrow. ’Tis twelve o’clock; bid the coach, cousin, be ready at one.”

“ For shame,” burst out Beatrix, in a passion of tears and mortification: “ You disgrace me by your cruel precautions; my own mother is the first to suspect me, and would take me away as my gaoler. I will not go with you, mother; I will go as no one’s prisoner. If I wanted to deceive, do you think I could find no means of evading you? My family suspects me. As those mistrust me that ought to love me most, let me leave them; I will go, but I will go alone: to Castlewood, be it. I have been unhappy there and lonely enough, let me go back, but spare me at least the humiliation of setting a watch over my misery, which is a trial

I can't bear. Let me go when you will, but alone, or not at all. You three can stay and triumph over my unhappiness, and I will bear it as I have borne it before. Let my gaoler-in-chief go order the coach that is to take me away. I thank you, Henry Esmond, for your share in the conspiracy. All my life long, I'll thank you, and remember you ; and you, brother, and you, mother, how shall I show my gratitude to you for your careful defence of my honour ? ”

She swept out of the room with the air of an Empress, flinging glances of defiance at us all, and leaving us conquerors of the field, but scared, and almost ashamed of our victory. It did indeed seem hard and cruel that we three should have conspired the banishment and humiliation of that fair creature. We looked at each other in silence ; 'twas not the first stroke by many of our actions in that unlucky time, which being done, we wished undone. We agreed it was best she should go alone, speaking stealthily to one another, and under our breaths, like persons engaged in an act they felt ashamed in doing.

In a half hour, it might be, after our talk

she came back, her countenance wearing the same defiant air which it had borne when she left us. She held a shagreen case in her hand; Esmond knew it as containing his diamonds which he had given to her for her marriage with Duke Hamilton, and which she had worn so splendidly on the inauspicious night of the Prince's arrival. “I have brought back,” says she, “to the Marquis of Esmond the present he deigned to make me in days when he trusted me better than now. I will never accept a benefit or a kindness from Henry Esmond more, and I give back these family diamonds, which belonged to one king's mistress, to the gentleman that suspected I would be another. Have you been upon your message of coach-caller, my Lord Marquis? Will you send your valet to see that I do not run away?” We were right: yet, by her manner, she had put us all in the wrong; we were conquerors, yet the honours of the day seemed to be with the poor oppressed girl.

That luckless box containing the stones had first been ornamented with a Baron's coronet, when Beatrix was engaged to the young gentleman from whom she parted, and afterwards the

gilt crown of a Duchess figured on the cover, which also poor Beatrix was destined never to wear. Lady Castlewood opened the case mechanically and scarce thinking what she did ; and behold, besides the diamonds, Esmond's present, there lay in the box the enamelled miniature of the late Duke, which Beatrix had laid aside with her mourning when the King came into the house ; and which the poor heedless thing very likely had forgotten.

“ Do you leave this, too, Beatrix ? ” says her mother, taking the miniature out, and with a cruelty she did not very often show ; but there are some moments when the tenderest women are cruel, and some triumphs which angels can't forego.*

Having delivered this stab, Lady Esmond was frightened at the effect of her blow. It went to poor Beatrix's heart ; she flushed up and passed a handkerchief across her eyes, and kissed the miniature, and put it into her bosom :—“ I had forgot it,” says she ; “ my injury made me

* This remark shows how unjustly and contemptuously even the best of men will sometimes judge of our sex. Lady Esmond had no intention of triumphing over her daughter ; but from a sense of duty alone pointed out her deplorable wrong.—R. E.

forget my grief, my mother has recalled both to me. Farewell, mother, I think I never can forgive you, something hath broke between us that no tears nor years can repair ; I always said I was alone, you never loved me, never, and were jealous of me from the time I sat on my father's knee. Let me go away, the sooner the better, I can bear to be with you no more."

" Go, child," says her mother, still very stern, " go and bend your proud knees and ask forgiveness, go pray in solitude for humility and repentance. 'Tis not your reproaches that make me unhappy, 'tis your hard heart, my poor Beatrix ; may God soften it and teach you one day to feel for your mother."

If my mistres was cruel, at least she never could be got to own as much. Her haughtines quite overtopped Beatrix's ; and if the girl had a proud spirit, I very much fear it came to her by inheritance.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR GUEST QUILTS US AS NOT BEING HOSPITABLE ENOUGH.

BEATRIX'S departure took place within an hour, her maid going with her in the post-chaise, and a man armed on the coach-box to prevent any danger of the road. Esmond and Frank thought of escorting the carriage, but she indignantly refused their company, and another man was sent to follow the coach, and not to leave it till it had passed over Hounslow Heath on the next day. And these two forming the whole of Lady Castlewood's male domesticks, Mr. Esmond's faithful John Lockwood came to wait on his mistress during their absence, though he would have preferred to escort Mrs. Lucy, his sweetheart, on her journey into the country.

We had a gloomy and silent meal; it seemed as if a darkness was over the house, since the

bright face of Beatrix had been withdrawn from it. In the afternoon came a message from the favourite to relieve us somewhat from this despondency. “The Queen hath been much shaken,” the note said; “she is better now, and all things will go well. Let my *Lord Castlewood* be ready against we send for him.”

At night there came a second billet: “There hath been a great battle in Council; Lord Treasurer hath broke his Staff, and hath fallen never to rise again; no successor is appointed. Lord B—— receives a great Whig company to-night at Golden Square. If he is trimming others are true; the Queen hath no more fits, but is a-bed now, and more quiet. Be ready against morning, when I still hope all will be well.”

The Prince came home shortly after the messenger who bore this billet had left the house. His Royal Highness was so much the better for the Bishop’s liquor, that to talk affairs to him now, was of little service. He was helped to the Royal bed; he called Castlewood familiarly by his own name; he quite forgot the part upon the acting of which his crown, his safety,

depended. 'Twas lucky that my Lady Castlewood's servants were out of the way, and only those heard him who would not betray him. He inquired after the adorable Beatrix, with a Royal hiccup in his voice; he was easily got to bed, and in a minute or two plunged in that deep slumber and forgetfulness with which Bacchus rewards the votaries of that God. We wished Beatrix had been there to see him in his cups. We regretted, perhaps, that she was gone.

One of the party at Kensington Square was fool enough to ride to Hounslow that night, *coram latronibus*, and to the inn which the family used ordinarily in their journeys out of London. Esmond desired my landlord not to acquaint Madam Beatrix with his coming, and had the grim satisfaction of passing by the door of the chamber where she lay with her maid, and of watching her chariot set forth in the early morning. He saw her smile and slip money into the man's hand who was ordered to ride behind the coach as far as Bagshot. The road being open, and the other servant armed, it appeared she dispensed with the escort of a second domestick; and this fellow bidding his young

mistress adieu with many bows, went and took a pot of ale in the kitchen, and returned in company with his brother servant, John Coachman, and his horses back to London.

They were not a mile out of Hounslow when the two worthies stopped for more drink, and here they were scared by seeing Colonel Esmond gallop by them. The man said in reply to Colonel Esmond's stern question, that his young mistress had sent her duty, only that, no other message: she had had a very good night, and would reach Castlewood by nightfall. The Colonel had no time for further colloquy, and galloped on swiftly to London, having business of great importance there, as my reader very well knoweth. The thought of Beatrix riding away from the danger soothed his mind not a little. His horse was at Kensington Square, (honest Dapple knew the way thither well enough,) before the tipsy guest of last night was awake and sober.

The account of the previous evening was known all over the town early next day. A violent altercation had taken place before the Queen in the Council-Chamber; and all the

coffee-houses had their version of the quarrel. The news brought my Lord Bishop early to Kensington Square, where he awaited the waking of his Royal master above stairs, and spoke confidently of having him proclaimed as Prince of Wales and heir to the throne before that day was over. The Bishop had entertained on the previous afternoon certain of the most influential gentlemen of the true British party. His Royal Highness had charmed all, both Scots and English, Papists and Churchmen : “Even Quakers,” says he, “were at our meeting, and if the stranger took a little too much British punch and ale, he will soon grow more accustomed to those liquors ; and my Lord Castlewood,” says the Bishop with a laugh, “must bear the cruel charge of having been for once in his life a little tipsy. He toasted your lovely sister a dozen times, at which we all laughed,” says the Bishop, “admiring so much fraternal affection. Where is that charming nymph, and why doth she not adorn your ladyship’s tea-table with her bright eyes ?”

Her ladyship said, drily, that Beatrix was not at home that morning ; my Lord Bishop was too busy with great affairs to trouble himself much

about the presence or absence of any lady however beautiful.

We were yet at table when Dr. A—— came from the palace with a look of great alarm ; the shocks the Queen had had the day before had acted on her severely ; he had been sent for, and had ordered her to be bled. The surgeon of Long Acre had come to cup the Queen, and her Majesty was now more easy and breathed more freely. What made us start at the name of Mr. Aymé ? “ Il faut être aimable pour être aimé ,” says the merry Doctor ; Esmond pulled his sleeve, and bade him hush. It was to Aymé’s house, after his fatal duel, that my dear Lord Castlewood, Frank’s father, had been carried to die.

No second visit could be paid to the Queen on that day at any rate ; and when our guest above gave his signal that he was awake, the Doctor, the Bishop, and Colonel Esmond, waited upon the Prince’s levee, and brought him their news, cheerful or dubious. The Doctor had to go away presently, but promised to keep the Prince constantly acquainted with what was taking place at the Palace hard-by. His counsel was, and the Bishop’s, that as soon as ever the Queen’s malady

took a favourable turn, the Prince should be introduced to her bedside ; the Council summoned ; the guard at Kensington and St. James's, of which two regiments were to be entirely relied on, and one known not to be hostile, would declare for the Prince, as the Queen would before the Lords of her Council, designating him as the heir to her throne.

With locked doors, and Colonel Esmond acting as secretary, the Prince and his Lordship of Rochester, passed many hours of this day composing Proclamations and Addresses to the Country, to the Scots, to the Clergy, to the People of London and England, announcing the arrival of the exiled descendant of three sovereigns, and his acknowledgment by his sister, as heir to the throne. Every safeguard for their liberties, the Church and People could ask, was promised to them. The Bishop could answer for the adhesion of very many prelates, who besought of their flocks and brother ecclesiastics to recognise the sacred right of the future sovereign, and to purge the country of the sin of rebellion.

During the composition of these papers, more

messengers than one came from the Palace, regarding the state of the August Patient there lying. At mid-day she was somewhat better ; at evening the torpor again seized her, and she wandered in her mind. At night Dr. A—— was with us again, with a report rather more favourable : no instant danger at any rate was apprehended. In the course of the last two years her Majesty had had many attacks similar, but more severe.

By this time we had finished a half dozen of Proclamations, (the wording of them so as to offend no parties, and not to give umbrage to Whigs or Dissenters, required very great caution,) and the young Prince, who had indeed shown, during a long day's labour, both alacrity at seizing the information given him, and ingenuity and skill in turning the phrases which were to go out signed by his name, here exhibited a good humour and thoughtfulness that ought to be set down to his credit.

“ Were these papers to be mislaid,” says he, “ or our scheme to come to mishap, my Lord Esmond's writing would bring him to a place where I heartily hope never to see him ; and so,

by your leave, I will copy the papers myself, though I am not very strong in spelling ; and if they are found they will implicate none but the person they most concern ;" and so, having carefully copied the Proclamations out, the Prince burned those in Colonel Esmond's hand-writing : " And now, and now, gentlemen," says he, " let us go to supper, and drink a glass with the ladies. My Lord Esmond, you will sup with us to-night ; you have given us of late too little of your company."

The Prince's meals were commonly served in the chamber which had been Beatrix's bed-room, adjoining that in which he slept. And the dutiful practice of his entertainers was to wait until their Royal Guest bade them take their places at table before they sat down to partake of the meal. On this night, as you may suppose, only Frank Castlewood and his mother were in waiting when the supper was announced to receive the Prince ; who had passed the whole of the day in his own apartment, with the Bishop as his Minister of State, and Colonel Esmond officiating as Secretary of his Council.

The Prince's countenance wore an expression

by no means pleasant ; when looking towards the little company assembled, and waiting for him, he did not see Beatrix's bright face there as usual to greet him. He asked Lady Esmond for his fair introducer of yesterday : her ladyship only cast her eyes down and said quietly, Beatrix could not be of the supper that night : nor did she show the least sign of confusion, whereas Castlewood turned red, and Esmond was no less embarrassed. I think women have an instinct of dissimulation ; they know by nature how to disguise their emotions far better than the most consummate male courtiers can do. Is not the better part of the life of many of them spent in hiding their feelings, in cajoling their tyrants, in masking over with fond smiles and artful gaiety their doubt, or their grief, or their terror ?

Our guest swallowed his supper very sulky ; it was not 'till the second bottle his Highness began to rally ; when Lady Castlewood asked leave to depart, he sent a message to Beatrix, hoping she would be present at the next day's dinner, and applied himself to drink, and to talk afterwards, for which there was subject in plenty.

The next day, we heard from our Informer at Kensington, that the Queen was somewhat better, and had been up for an hour, though she was not well enough yet to receive any visitor.

At dinner a single cover was laid for his Royal Highness; and the two gentlemen alone waited on him. We had had a consultation in the morning with Lady Castlewood, in which it had been determined, that should his Highness ask further questions about Beatrix he should be answered by the gentlemen of the house.

He was evidently disturbed and uneasy, looking towards the door constantly, as if expecting some one. There came, however, nobody, except honest John Lockwood, when he knocked with a dish, which those within took from him; so the meals were always arranged, and, I believe, the council in the kitchen were of opinion, that my young lord had brought over a priest, who had converted us all into Papists, and that Papists were like Jews, eating together, and not choosing to take their meals in the sight of Christians.

The Prince tried to cover his displeasure; he was but a clumsy dissembler at that time, and

when out of humour, could with difficulty keep a serene countenance ; and having made some foolish attempts at trivial talk, he came to his point presently, and in as easy a manner as he could, saying to Lord Castlewood, he hoped, he requested, his lordship's mother and sister would be of the supper that night. As the time hung heavy on him, and he must not go abroad, would not Miss Beatrix hold him company at a game of cards ?

At this, looking up at Esmond, and taking the signal from him, Lord Castlewood informed his Royal Highness * that his sister Beatrix was not at Kensington ; and that her family had thought it best she should quit the town.

“ Not at Kensington ! ” says he ; “ is she ill ? she was well, yesterday ; wherefore should she quit the town ? Is it at your orders, my lord, or Colonel Esmond's, who seems the master of this house ? ”

“ Not of this, sir,” says Frank very nobly, “ only of our house in the country, which he

* In London we addressed the Prince as Royal Highness, invariably ; though the women persisted in giving him the title of King.

hath given to us. This is my mother's house, and Walcote is my father's, and the Marquis of Esmond knows he hath but to give his word, and I return his to him."

"The Marquis of Esmond!—the Marquis of Esmond," says the Prince, tossing off a glass, "meddles too much with my affairs, and presumes on the service he hath done me. If you want to carry your suit with Beatrix, my lord, by blocking her up in gaol, let me tell you that is not the way to win a woman."

"I was not aware, sir, that I had spoken of my suit to Madam Beatrix to your Royal Highness."

"Bah, bah, Monsieur! we need not be a conjuror to see that. It makes itself seen at all moments. You are jealous, my lord, and the Maid of Honour cannot look at another face without yours beginning to scowl. That which you do is unworthy, Monsieur: is inhospitable, is, is lâche, yes, lâche:" (he spoke rapidly in French, his rage carrying him away with each phrase:) "I come to your house; I risk my life; I pass it in ennui; I repose myself on your fidelity; I have no company, but your lordship's sermons

or the conversations of that adorable young lady, and you take her from me ; and you, you rest ! Merci, Monsieur ! I shall thank you when I have the means ; I shall know to recompense a devotion, a little importunate, my lord,—a little importunate. For a month past your airs of protector have annoyed me beyond measure. You deign to offer me the crown, and bid me take it on my knees, like King John, eh ! I know my history, Monsieur, and mock myself of frowning barons. I admire your mistrefs, and you send her to a Bastille of the Province ; I enter your house and you mistrust me. I will leave it, Monsieur ; from to-night I will leave it. I have other friends, whose loyalty will not be so ready to question mine. If I have garters to give away, 'tis to noblemen who are not so ready to think evil. Bring me a coach, and let me quit this place, or let the fair Beatrix return to it. I will not have your hospitality at the expense of the freedom of that fair creature.”

This harangue was uttered with rapid gesticulations such as the French use, and in the language of that nation. The Prince striding up and down the room ; his face flushed, and his hands

trembling with anger. He was very thin and frail from repeated illness and a life of pleasure. Either Castlewood or Esmond could have broke him across their knee, and in half-a-minute's struggle put an end to him; and here he was insulting us both, and scarce deigning to hide from the two whose honour it most concerned, the passion he felt for the young lady of our family. My Lord Castlewood replied to the Prince's tirade very nobly and simply.

“Sir,” says he, “your Royal Highness is pleased to forget that others risk their lives, and for your cause. Very few, Englishmen, please God, would dare to lay hands on your sacred person, though none would ever think of respecting ours. Our family's lives are at your service, and everything we have except our honour.”

“Honour! bah, sir, who ever thought of hurting your honour?” says the Prince, with a peevish air.

“We implore your Royal Highness, never to think of hurting it,” says Lord Castlewood, with a low bow. The night being warm, the windows were open both towards the Gardens and the

Square. Colonel Esmond heard through the closed door the voice of a watchman, calling the hour, in the Square on the other side. He opened the door communicating with the Prince's room; Martin, the servant, that had rode with Beatrix to Hounslow was just going out of the chamber as Esmond entered it, and when the fellow was gone, and the watchman again sang his cry of “Passest ten o'clock, and a star-light night,” Esmond spoke to the Prince in a low voice, and said: “Your Royal Highness hears that man.”

“Après? Monsieur,” says the Prince.

“I have but to beckon him from the window, and send him fifty yards, and he returns with a guard of men, and I deliver up to him the body of the person calling himself James the Third, for whose capture Parliament hath offered a reward of 5000*l.*, as your Royal Highness saw on our ride from Rochester. I have but to say the word, and, by the Heaven that made me, I would say it, if I thought the Prince, for his honour's sake, would not desist from insulting ours. But the first gentleman of England knows his duty too well to forget himself with the

humblest, or peril his crown for a deed that were shameful if it were done."

"Has your lordship anything to say," says the Prince, turning to Frank Castlewood, and quite pale with anger; "any threat or any insult, with which you would like to end this agreeable night's entertainment?"

"I follow the head of our house," says Castlewood, bowing gravely. "At what time shall it please the Prince that we should wait upon him in the morning?"

"You will wait on the Bishop of Rochester early, you will bid him bring his coach hither; and prepare an apartment for me in his own house, or in a place of safety. The King will reward you handsomely, never fear, for all you have done in his behalf. I wish you a good night, and shall go to bed, unless it pleases the Marquis of Esmond to call his colleague, the watchman, and that I should pass the night with the Kensington guard. Fare you well, be sure I will remember you. My Lord Castlewood, I can go to bed to-night without need of a chamberlain." And the Prince dismissed us with a grim bow, locking one door as he spoke,

that into the supper-room, and the other through which we passed, after us. It led into the small chamber which Frank Castlewood or *Monsieur Baptiste* occupied, and by which Martin entered, when Colonel Esmond but now saw him in the chamber.

At an early hour next morning, the Bishop arrived, and was closetted for some time with his master in his own apartment, where the Prince laid open to his councillor the wrongs which, according to his version, he had received from the gentlemen of the Esmond family. The worthy prelate came out from the conference with an air of great satisfaction: he was a man full of resources, and of a most assured fidelity, and possessed of genius and a hundred good qualities; but captious and of a most jealous temper, that could not help exulting at the downfall of any favourite; and he was pleased in spite of himself to hear that the Esmond ministry was at an end.

“I have soothed your Guest,” says he, coming out to the two gentlemen and the widow, who had been made acquainted with somewhat of the dispute of the night before. (By the version we

gave her, the Prince was only made to exhibit anger because we doubted of his intentions in respect to Beatrix ; and to leave us, because we questioned his honour.) “ But I think, all things considered, ’tis as well he should leave this house ; and then, my Lady Castlewood,” says the Bishop, “ my pretty Beatrix may come back to it.”

“ She is quite as well at home at Castlewood,” Esmond’s mistress said, “ till everything is over.”

“ You shall have your title, Esmond, that I promise you,” says the good Bishop, assuming the airs of a Prime Minister. “ The Prince hath expressed himself most nobly in regard of the little difference of last night, and I promise you he hath listened to my sermon, as well as to that of other folks,” says the Doctor archly ; “ he hath every great and generous quality, with perhaps a weakness for the sex which belongs to his family, and hath been known in scores of popular sovereigns from King David downwards.”

“ My lord, my lord,” breaks out Lady Esmond, “ the levity with which you speak of such conduct towards our sex shocks me, and what you call weakness I call deplorable sin.”

“ Sin it is, my dear creature,” says the Bishop

with a shrug, taking snuff; “but consider, what a sinner King Solomon was, and in spite of a thousand of wives too.”

“Enough of this, my lord,” says Lady Castlewood with a fine blush, and walked out of the room very stately.

The Prince entered it presently with a smile on his face, and if he felt any offence against us on the previous night, at present exhibited none. He offered a hand to each gentleman with great courtesy; “If all your Bishops preach so well as Doctor Atterbury,” says he, “I don’t know, gentlemen, what may happen to me. I spoke very hastily, my lords, last night, and ask pardon of both of you. But I must not stay any longer,” says he, “giving umbrage to good friends, or keeping pretty girls away from their homes. My Lord Bishop hath found a safe place for me, hard by at a Curate’s house, whom the Bishop can trust, and whose wife is so ugly as to be beyond all danger; we will decamp into those new quarters, and I leave you, thanking you for a hundred kindnesses here. Where is my hostess, that I may bid her farewell; to welcome her in a house of my own, sooon, I trust,

where my friends shall have no cause to quarrel with me."

Lady Castlewood arrived presently, blushing with great grace, and tears filling her eyes as the Prince graciously saluted her. She looked so charming and young, that the Doctor, in his bantering way, could not help speaking of her beauty to the Prince; whose compliment made her blush, and look more charming still.

CHAPTER XII.

A GREAT SCHEME, AND WHO BAULKED IT.

AS characters written with a secret ink come out with the application of fire, and disappear again and leave the paper white, so soon as it is cool ; a hundred names of men, high in repute and favouring the Prince's cause, that were writ in our private lists, would have been visible enough on the great roll of the conspiracy, had it ever been laid open under the sun. What crowds would have pressed forward, and subscribed their names and protested their loyalty, when the danger was over ! What a number of Whigs, now high in place and creatures of the all-powerful minister, scorned Mr. Walpole then ! If ever a match was gained by the manliness and decision of a few at a moment of danger ; if ever one was lost by the

treachery and imbecility of those that had the cards in their hands, and might have played them ; it was in that momentous game which was enacted in the next three days, and of which the noblest crown in the world was the stake.

From the conduct of my Lord Bolingbroke, those who were interested in the scheme we had in hand, saw pretty well that he was not to be trusted. Should the Prince prevail, it was his lordship's gracious intention to declare for him : should the Hannoverian party bring in their sovereign, who more ready to go on his knee, and cry God save King George ? And he betrayed the one Prince and the other ; but exactly at the wrong time : when he should have struck for King James, he faltered and coquettred with the Whigs : and having committed himself by the most monstrous professions of devotion, which the Elector rightly scorned, he proved the justnes of their contempt for him by flying and taking renegado service with St. Germain, just when he should have kept aloof : and that Court despised him, as the manly and resolute men who established the Elector in England had before done. He signed his own name to every accusation

of insincerity his enemies made against him ; and the King and the Pretender alike could show proofs of St. John's treachery under his own hand and seal.

Our friends kept a pretty close watch upon his motions, as on those of the brave and hearty Whig party that made little concealment of theirs. They would have in the Elector, and used every means in their power to effect their end. My Lord Marlborough was now with them. His expulsion from power by the Tories had thrown that great captain at once on the Whig side. We heard he was coming from Antwerp ; and, in fact, on the day of the Queen's death, he once more landed on English shore. A great part of the army was always with their illustrious leader ; even the Tories in it were indignant at the injustice of the persecution which the Whig officers were made to undergo. The chiefs of these were in London, and at the head of them one of the most intrepid men in the world, the Scots Duke of Argyle, whose conduct on the second day after that to which I have now brought down my history, ended, as such honesty and bravery deserved to end, by

establishing the present Royal race on the English throne.

Meanwhile there was no slight difference of opinion amongst the councillors surrounding the Prince, as to the plan his Highness should pursue. His female minister at Court, fancying she saw some amelioration in the Queen, was for waiting a few days, or hours it might be, until he could be brought to her bedside, and acknowledged as her heir. Mr. Esmond was for having him march thither, escorted by a couple of troops of Horse Guards, and openly presenting himself to the Council. During the whole of the night of the 29th-30th July, the Colonel was engaged with gentlemen of the military profession, whom 'tis needless here to name; suffice it to say that several of them had exceeding high rank in the army, and one of them in especial was a General, who when he heard the Duke of Marlborough was coming on the other side, waved his crutch over his head with a huzzah, at the idea that he should march out and engage him. Of the three Secretaries of State, we knew that one was devoted to us. The Governor of the Tower was ours: the two companies on duty at Kensington

barrack were safe, and we had intelligence, very speedy and accurate, of all that took place at the Palace within.

At noon, on the 30th of July, a message came to the Prince's friends that the Committee of Council was sitting at Kensington Palace, their Graces of Ormonde and Shrewsbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the three Secretaries of State being there assembled. In an hour afterwards hurried news was brought that the two great Whig Dukes, Argyle and Somerset, had broke into the Council-chamber without a summons, and taken their seat at table. After holding a debate there, the whole party proceeded to the chamber of the Queen, who was lying in great weakness, but still sensible, and the lords recommended his Grace of Shrewsbury as the fittest person to take the vacant place of Lord Treasurer; her Majesty gave him the staff, as all know. “And now,” writ my messenger from Court, “*now or never is the time.*”

Now or never was the time indeed. In spite of the Whig Dukes, our side had still the majority in the Council, and Esmond, to whom the message had been brought (the personage at

Court not being aware that the Prince had quitted his lodging in Kensington Square), and Esmond's gallant young aide-de-camp, Frank Castlewood, putting on sword and uniform, took a brief leave of their dear lady, who embraced and blessed them both; and went to her chamber to pray for the issue of the great event which was then pending.

Castlewood sped to the barrack to give warning to the captain of the guard there; and then went to the King's Arms tavern at Kensington, where our friends were assembled, having come by parties of twos and threes, riding or in coaches, and were got together in the upper chamber, fifty-three of them; their servants, who had been instructed to bring arms likewise, being below in the garden of the tavern, where they were served with drink. Out of this garden is a little door that leads into the road of the Palace, and through this it was arranged that masters and servants were to march; when that Signal was given, and That Personage appeared, for whom all were waiting. There was in our company the famous officer next in command to the Captain-General of the Forces, his Grace

the Duke of Ormonde, who was within at the Council. There were with him two more lieutenant-generals, nine major-generals, and brigadiers, seven colonels, eleven Peers of Parliament, and twenty-one members of the House of Commons. The Guard was with us within and without the Palace: the Queen was with us; the Council, (save the two Whig Dukes, that must have succumbed;) the day was our own, and with a beating heart Esmond walked rapidly to the Mall at Kensington, where he had parted with the Prince on the night before. For three nights the Colonel had not been to bed: the last had been passed summoning the Prince's friends together, of whom the great majority had no sort of inkling of the transaction pending until they were told that he was actually on the spot, and were summoned to strike the blow. The night before, and after the altercation with the Prince, my gentleman, having suspicions of his Royal Highness, and fearing lest he should be minded to give us the slip, and fly off after his fugitive beauty, had spent, if the truth must be told, at the Greyhound tavern, over against my Lady Esmond's house in Kensington Square,

with an eye on the door, lest the Prince should escape from it. The night before that he had passed in his boots, at the Crown at Hounslow, where he must watch forsooth all night, in order to get one moment's glimpse of Beatrix in the morning. And fate had decreed that he was to have a fourth night's ride and wakefulness before his business was ended.

He ran to the curate's house in Kensington Mall, and asked for Mr. Bates, the name the Prince went by. The curate's wife said Mr. Bates had gone abroad very early in the morning in his boots, saying he was going to the Bishop of Rochester's house at Chelsey. But the Bishop had been at Kensington himself two hours ago to seek for Mr. Bates, and had returned in his coach to his own house, when he heard that the gentleman was gone thither to seek him.

This absence was most unpropitious, for an hour's delay might cost a kingdom; Esmond had nothing for it but to hasten to the King's Arms, and tell the gentlemen there assembled, that Mr. George (as we called the Prince there) was not at home, but that Esmond would go fetch him; and taking a General's coach that

happened to be there, Esmond drove across the country to Chelsey to the Bishop's house there.

The porter said two gentlemen were with his lordship, and Esmond ran past this sentry up to the locked door of the Bishop's study, at which he rattled, and was admitted presently. Of the Bishop's guests one was a brother prelate, and the other the Abbé G——.

“Where is Mr. George?” says Mr. Esmond, “now is the time.” The Bishop looked scared; “I went to his lodging,” he said, “and they told me he was come hither. I returned as quick as coach would carry me; and he hath not been here.”

The Colonel burst out with an oath; that was all he could say to their reverences; ran down the stairs again, and bidding the coachman, an old friend and fellow-campaigner, drive as if he was charging the French with his master at Wynendael, they were back at Kensington in half an hour.

Again Esmond went to the curate's house. Mr. George had not returned. The Colonel had to go with this blank errand to the gentlemen

at the King's Arms, that were grown very impatient by this time.

Out of the window of the tavern, and looking over the garden-wall, you can see the green before Kensington Palace, the Palace gate (round which the ministers' coaches were standing), and the barrack building. As we were looking out from this window in gloomy discourse, we heard presently trumpets blowing, and some of us ran to the window of the front-room, looking into the High Street of Kensington, and saw a regiment of Horse coming.

“It’s Ormonde’s Guards,” says one—

“No, by God, it’s Argyle’s old regiment,” says my General, clapping down his crutch.

It was, indeed, Argyle’s regiment that was brought from Westminster, and that took the place of the regiment at Kensington on which we could rely.

“O Harry!” says one of the Generals there present, “You were born under an unlucky star; I begin to think that there’s no Mr. George, nor Mr. Dragon either. ’Tis not the peerage I care for, for our name is so ancient and famous, that merely to be called Lord Lydiard would do me

no good; but 'tis the chance you promised me of fighting Marlborough."

As we were talking, Castlewood entered the room with a disturbed air.

"What news, Frank?" says the Colonel, "is Mr. George coming at last?"

"D—— him, look here;" says Castlewood, holding out a paper, "I found it in the book,—the what you call it, 'Eikum Basilikum,'—that villain Martin put it there,—he said his young Mistress bade him. It was directed to me, but it was meant for him I know, and I broke the seal and read it."

The whole assembly of officers seemed to swim away before Esmond's eyes as he read the paper; all that was written on it was:—"Beatrix Esmond is sent away to prison, to Castlewood, where she will pray for happier days."

"Can you guess where he is?" says Castlewood.

"Yes," says Colonel Esmond. He knew full well, Frank knew full well: our instinct told whither that traitor had fled.

He had courage to turn to the company and say, "Gentlemen, I fear very much

that Mr. George will not be here to-day ; something hath happened—and—and—I very much fear some accident may befall him, which must keep him out of the way. Having had your noon's draught, you had best pay the reckoning and go home ; there can be no game where there is no one to play it."

Some of the gentlemen went away without a word, others called to pay their duty to her Majesty and ask for her health. The little army disappeared into the darkness out of which it had been called ; there had been no writings, no paper to implicate any man. Some few officers and Members of Parliament had been invited over night to breakfast at the King's Arms, at Kensington ; and they had called for their bill and gone home.

CHAPTER XIII.

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AUGUST, 1ST, 1714.

“ **D**OES my mistress know of this ? ” Esmond asked of Frank, as they walked along.

“ My mother found the letter in the book, on the toilet-table. She had writ it ere she had left home,” Frank said. “ Mother met her on the stairs, with her hand upon the door, trying to enter, and never left her after that ’till she went away. He did not think of looking at it there, nor had Martin the chance of telling him. I believe the poor devil meant no harm, though I half killed him ; he thought ’twas to Beatrix’s brother he was bringing the letter.”

Frank never said a word of reproach to me, for having brought the villain amongst us. As we knocked at the door, I said ; “ When will

the horses be ready ? ” Frank pointed with his cane, they were turning the street that moment.

We went up and bade adieu to our mistress ; she was in a dreadful state of agitation by this time, and that Bishop was with her whose company she was so fond of.

“ Did you tell him, my lord,” says Esmond, “ that Beatrix was at Castlewood ? ” The Bishop blushed, and stammered : “ Well,” says he, “ I . . . ”

“ You served the villain right,” broke out Mr. Esmond, “ and he has lost a crown by what you told him.”

My mistress turned quite white : “ Henry, Henry,” says she, “ do not kill him.”

“ It may not be too late,” says Esmond ; “ he may not have gone to Castlewood ; pray God, it is not too late.” The Bishop was breaking out with some *banal* phrases about loyalty, and the sacredness of the Sovereign’s person ; but Esmond sternly bade him hold his tongue, burn all papers, and take care of Lady Castlewood ; and in five minutes he and Frank were in the saddle, John Lockwood behind them, riding towards Castlewood at a rapid pace.

We were just got to Alton, when who should meet us but old Lockwood, the porter from Castlewood, John's father, walking by the side of the Hexham flying-coach, who slept the night at Alton. Lockwood said his young mistress had arrived at home on Wednesday night, and this morning, Friday, had despatched him with a packet for my lady at Kensington, saying the letter was of great importance.

We took the freedom to break it, while Lockwood stared with wonder, and cried out his Lord bles me's, and Who'd a thought it's, at the sight of his young lord whom he had not seen these seven years.

The packet from Beatrix contained no news of importance at all. It was written in a jocular strain, affecting to make light of her captivity. She asked whether she might have leave to visit Mrs. Tusker, or to walk beyond the court, and the garden-wall. She gave news of the peacocks, and a fawn she had there. She bade her mother send her certain gowns and smocks by old Lockwood; she sent her duty to a certain Person, if certain other persons permitted her to take such a freedom; how that as she was not able to

play cards with him, she hoped he would read good books, such as Doctor Atterbury's sermons and *Eikon Basilike*: she was going to read good books: she thought her pretty mamma would like to know she was not crying her eyes out.

“Who is in the house besides you, Lockwood?” says the Colonel.

“There be the laundry-maid, and the kitchen-maid, Madam Beatrix's maid, the man from London, and that be all: and he sleepeth in my lodge · away from the maids,” says old Lockwood.

Esmond scribbled a line with a pencil on the note, giving it to the old man, and bidding him go on to his lady. We knew why Beatrix had been so dutiful on a sudden, and why she spoke of *Eikon Basilike*. She writ this letter to put the Prince on the scent, and the porter out of the way.

“We have a fine moonlight night for riding on.” says Esmond; “Frank, we may reach Castlewood in time yet.” All the way along they made inquiries at the post-houses, when a tall young gentleman in a grey suit, with a light-brown periwig, just the colour of my lord's, had been seen to pass. He had set off at six that morning

and we at three in the afternoon. He rode almost as quickly as we had done ; he was seven hours a-head of us still when we reached the last stage.

We rode over Castlewood Downs before the breaking of dawn. We passed the very spot where the car was upset fourteen years since ; and Mohun lay. The village was not up yet, nor the forge lighted, as we rode through it, passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by the church, and over the bridge. We got off our horses at the bridge and walked up to the gate.

“ If she is safe,” says Frank, trembling, and his honest eyes filling with tears, “ a silver statue to Our Lady ! ” He was going to rattle at the great iron knocker on the oak gate ; but Esmond stopped his kinsman’s hand. He had his own fears, his own hopes, his own despairs and griefs, too : but he spoke not a word of these to his companion, or showed any signs of emotion.

He went and tapped at the little window at the porter’s lodge, gently, but repeatedly, until the man came to the bars.

“ Who’s there : ” says he, looking out ; it was the servant from Kensington.

“ My Lord Castlewood and Colonel Esmond,” we said, from below. “ Open the gate and let us in without any noise.”

“ My Lord Castlewood ? ” says the other ; “ my lord’s here, and in bed.”

“ Open, d—n you,” says Castlewood, with a curse.

“ I shall open to no one,” says the man, shutting the glass window as Frank drew a pistol. He would have fired at the porter, but Esmond again held his hand.

“ There are more ways than one,” says he, “ of entering such a great house as this.”—Frank grumbled that the west gate was half a mile round.—“ But I know of a way that’s not a hundred yard’s off,” says Mr. Esmond ; and leading his kinsman close along the wall, and by the shrubs, which had now grown thick on what had been an old moat about the house, they came to the buttress, at the side of which the little window was, which was Father Holt’s private door. Esmond climbed up to this easily, broke a pane that had been mended, and touched the spring inside, and the two gentlemen passed in that way, treading as

lightly as they could ; and so going through the passage into the court, over which the dawn was now reddening, and where the fountain plashed in the silence.

They sped instantly to the porter's lodge, where the fellow had not fastened his door that led into the court ; and pistol in hand came upon the terrified wretch, and bade him be silent. Then they asked him (Esmond's head reeled, and he almost fell as he spoke) when Lord Castlewood had arrived ? He said on the previous evening, about eight of the clock.—“ And what then ? ”— His lordship supped with his sister.—“ Did the man wait ? ” Yes, he and my lady's maid, both waited : the other servants made the supper ;— and there was no wine, and they could give his lordship but milk, at which he grumbled ; and— and Madam Beatrix kept Miss Lucy always in the room with her. And there being a bed across the court in the Chaplain's room, she had arranged my lord was to sleep there. Madam Beatrix had come down stairs laughing with the maids, and had locked herself in, and my lord had stood for a while talking to her through the door, and she laughing at him. And then he

paced the court awhile, and she came again to the upper window; and my lord implored her to come down and walk in the room; but she would not, and laughed at him again, and shut the window; and so my lord uttering what seemed curses, but in a foreign language, went to the chaplain's room to bed.

“Was this all?”—“All,” the man swore upon his honour, “all as he hoped to be saved.—Stop, there was one thing more. My lord, on arriving, and once or twice during supper, did kiss his sister as was natural, and she kissed him.” At this Esmond ground his teeth with rage, and well nigh throttled the amazed miscreant, who was speaking, whereas Castlewood, seizing hold of his cousin's hand, burst into a great fit of laughter.

“If it amuses thee,” says Esmond in French, “that your sister should be exchanging of kisses with a stranger, I fear poor Beatrix will give thee plenty of sport.”—Esmond darkly thought, how Hamilton, Ashburnham, had before been masters of those roses that the young Prince's lips were now feeding on. He sickened at that notion. Her cheek was defecrated, her beauty tarnished: shame and honour stood between it

and him. The love was dead within him ; had she a crown to bring him with her love, he felt that both would degrade him.

But this wrath against Beatrix did not lessen the angry feelings of the Colonel against the man who had been the occasion if not the cause of the evil. Frank sat down on a stone-bench in the court-yard, and fairly fell asleep, while Esmond paced up and down the court, debating what should ensue. What mattered how much or how little had passed between the Prince and the poor faithless girl ? They were arrived in time perhaps to rescue her person, but not her mind ; had she not instigated the young Prince to come to her ; suborned servants, dismissed others, so that she might communicate with him ? The treacherous heart within her had surrendered, though the place was safe ; and it was to win this that he had given a life's struggle and devotion ; this, that she was ready to give away for the bribe of a coronet or a wink of the Prince's eye.

When he had thought his thoughts out he shook up poor Frank from his sleep, who rose yawning, and said he had been dreaming of

Clotilda :—“ You must back me,” says Esmond, “ in what I am going to do. I have been thinking that yonder scoundrel may have been instructed to tell that story, and that the whole of it may be a lie: if it be, we shall find it out from the gentleman who is asleep yonder. See if the door leading to my lady’s rooms (so we called the rooms at the north-west angle of the house),—see if the door is barred as he saith.” We tried ; it was indeed as the lacquey had said, closed within.

“ It may have been open and shut afterwards,” says poor Esmond, “ the foundress of our family let our ancestor in in that way.”

“ What will you do, Harry, if—if what that fellow saith should turn out untrue?” The young man looked scared and frightened into his kinsman’s face: I dare say it wore no very pleasant expression.

“ Let us first go see whether the two stories agree,” says Esmond: and went in at the passage and opened the door into what had been his own chamber now for well nigh five-and-twenty years. A candle was still burning, and the Prince asleep dressed on the bed—Esmond did

not care for making a noise. The Prince started up in his bed, seeing two men in his chamber : “ Qui est là ? ” says he, and took a pistol from under his pillow.

“ It is the Marquis of Esmond,” says the Colonel, “ come to welcome his Majesty to his house of Castlewood, and to report of what hath happened in London. Pursuant to the King’s orders, I passed the night before last after leaving his Majesty, in waiting upon the friends of the King. It is a pity that his Majesty’s desire to see the country and to visit our poor house should have caused the King to quit London without notice yesterday, when the opportunity happened which in all human probability may not occur again ; and had the King not chosen to ride to Castlewood, the Prince of Wales might have slept at St. James’s.”

“ ‘Sdeath ! gentlemen,” says the Prince, starting off his bed, whereon he was lying in his clothes, “ the Doctor was with me yesterday morning, and after watching by my sister all night, told me I might not hope to see the Queen.”

“ It would have been otherwise,” says Esmond with another bow ; “ as by this time the Queen

may be dead in spite of the Doctor.—The Council was met, a new Treasurer was appointed, the Troops were devoted to the King's cause; and fifty loyal gentlemen of the greatest names of this kingdom were assembled to accompany the Prince of Wales, who might have been the acknowledged heir of the throne, or the possessor of it by this time, had your Majesty not chosen to take the air. We were ready; there was only one person that failed us, your Majesty's gracious—”

“ Morbleu, Monsieur, you give me too much Majesty,” said the Prince, who had now risen up and seemed to be looking to one of us to help him to his coat. But neither stirred.

“ We shall take care,” says Esmond, “ not much oftener to offend in that particular.”

“ What mean you, my lord?” says the Prince, and muttered something about a *guet-à-pens*, which Esmond caught up.

“ The snare, Sir,” said he, “ was not of our laying; it is not we that invited you. We came to avenge, and not to compasf, the dis-honour of our family.”

“ Dishonour! Morbleu, there has been no

dishonour," says the Prince, turning scarlet, "only a little harmless playing."

"That was meant to end seriously."

"I swear," the Prince broke out impetuously, "upon the honour of a gentleman, my lords—"

"That we arrived in time. No wrong hath been done, Frank," says Colonel Esmond, turning round to young Castlewood, who stood at the door as the talk was going on. "See! here is a paper whereon his Majesty hath deigned to commence some verses in honour, or dishonour, of Beatrix. Here is 'Madame' and 'Flamme,' 'Cruelle' and 'Rebelle,' and 'Amour' and 'Jour,' in the Royal writing and spelling. Had the Gracious lover been happy, he had not passed his time in sighing." In fact, and actually as he was speaking, Esmond cast his eyes down towards the table, and saw a paper, on which my young Prince had been scrawling a Madrigal, that was to finish his charmer on the morrow.

"Sir," says the Prince, burning with rage (he had assumed his Royal coat unassisted by this time), "did I come here to receive insults?"

"To confer them, may it please your Majesty," says the Colonel, with a very low bow, "and the

gentlemen of our family are come to thank you."

"*Malédiction!*" says the young man, tears starting into his eyes, with helpless rage and mortification. "What will you with me, gentlemen?"

"If your Majesty will please to enter the next apartment," says Esmond, preserving his grave tone, "I have some papers there which I would gladly submit to you, and by your permission I will lead the way;" and taking the taper up, and backing before the Prince with very great ceremony, Mr. Esmond passed into the little Chaplain's room, through which we had just entered into the house:—"Please to set a chair for his Majesty, Frank," says the Colonel to his companion, who wondered almost as much at this scene, and was as much puzzled by it, as the other actor in it. Then going to the crypt over the mantel-piece, the Colonel opened it, and drew thence the papers which so long had lain there.

"Here, may it please your Majesty," says he, "is the Patent of Marquis sent over by your Royal Father at St. Germains to Viscount

Castlewood, my father; here is the witnessed certificate of my father's marriage to my mother, and of my birth and christening; I was christened of that religion of which your sainted sire gave all through life so shining example. These are my titles, dear Frank, and this what I do with them: here go Baptism and Marriage, and here the Marquiseate and the August Sign-Manual, with which your predecessor was pleased to honour our race." And as Esmond spoke he set the papers burning in the brazier. " You will please sir, to remember," he continued, " that our family hath ruined itself by fidelity to yours: that my grandfather spent his estate, and gave his blood and his son to die for your service; that my dear lord's grandfather (for lord you are now, Frank, by right and title too,) died for the same cause; that my poor kinswoman, my father's second wife, after giving away her honour to your wicked perjured race, sent all her wealth to the King: and got in return that precious title that lies in ashes, and this inestimable yard of blue ribband. I lay this at your feet and stamp upon it: I draw this sword, and break it and deny you; and had you completed the wrong you

designed us, by Heaven, I would have driven it through your heart, and no more pardoned you than your father pardoned Monmouth. Frank will do the same, won't you, cousin?"

Frank, who had been looking on with a stupid air at the papers as they flamed in the old brazier, took out his sword and broke it, holding his head down:—"I go with my cousin," says he, giving Esmond a grasp of the hand. "Marquis or not, by —, I stand by him any day. I beg your Majesty's pardon for swearing; that is—that is—I'm for the Elector of Hannover. It's all your Majesty's own fault. The Queen's dead most likely by this time. And you might have been King if you hadn't come dangling after Trix."

"Thus to lose a crown," says the young Prince, starting up, and speaking French in his eager way; "to lose the loveliest woman in the world; to lose the loyalty of such hearts as yours, is not this, my lords, enough of humiliation?—Marquis, if I go on my knees, will you pardon me?—No, I can't do that, but I can offer you reparation, that of honour, that of gentlemen. Favour me by crossing the sword with

mine: yours is broke—see, yonder in the armoire are two ;” and the Prince took them out as eager as a boy, and held them towards Esmond :—“ Ah ! you will ? Merci, monsieur, merci ! ”

Extremely touched by this immense mark of condescension and repentance for wrong done, Colonel Esmond bowed down so low, as almost to kiss the gracious young hand that conferred on him such an honour, and took his guard in silence. The swords were no sooner met, than Castlewood knocked up Esmond’s with the blade of his own, which he had broke off short at the shell ; and the Colonel falling back a step dropped his point with another very low bow, and declared himself perfectly satisfied.

“ Eh bien, Vicomte ! ” says the young Prince, who was a boy, and a French boy, “ il ne nous reste qu’une chose à faire :” he placed his sword upon the table, and the fingers of his two hands upon his breast :—“ We have one more thing to do,” says he, “ You do not divine it ? ” He stretched out his arms :—“ Embrassons nous ! ”

The talk was scarce over, when Beatrix entered the room :—What came she to seek there ? She

started and turned pale at the sight of her brother and kinsman, drawn swords, broken sword-blades, and papers yet smouldering in the brazier.

“Charming Beatrix,” says the Prince, with a blush which became him very well, “these lords have come a horse-back from London, where my sister lies in a despaired state, and where her successor makes himself desired. Pardon me for my escapade of last evening. I had been so long a prisoner, that I seized the occasion of a promenade on horse-back, and my horses naturally bore me towards you. I found you a Queen in your little Court, where you deigned to entertain me. Present my homages to your Maids of Honour. I sighed as you slept, under the window of your chamber, and then retired to seek rest in my own. It was there that these gentlemen agreeably roused me. Yes, milords, for that is a happy day that makes a Prince acquainted, at whatever cost to his vanity, with such a noble heart as that of the Marquis of Esmond. Mademoiselle, may we take your coach to town? I saw it in the hangar, and this poor Marquis must be dropping with sleep.”

“ Will it please the King to breakfast before he goes ? ” was all Beatrix could say. The roses had shuddered out of her cheeks ; her eyes were glaring ; she looked quite old. She came up to Esmond and hissed out a word or two :—“ If I did not love you before, cousin,” says she, “ think how I love you now.” If words could stab, no doubt she would have killed Esmond ; she looked at him as if she could.

But her keen words gave no wound to Mr. Esmond ; his heart was too hard. As he looked at her, he wondered that he could ever have loved her. His love of ten years was over, it fell down dead on the spot, at the Kensington Tavern, where Frank brought him the note out of Eikon Basili. The Prince blushed and bowed low, as she gazed at him, and quitted the chamber. I have never seen her from that day.

Horses were fetched and put to the chariot presently. My lord rode outside, and as for Esmond he was so tired that he was no sooner in the carriage than he fell asleep and never woke till night, as the coach came into Alton.

As we drove to the Bell Inn comes a mitred coach with our old friend Lockwood beside the

coachman. My Lady Castlewood and the Bishop were inside; she gave a little scream when she saw us. The two coaches entered the inn almost together. The landlord and people coming out with lights to welcome the visitors.

We in our coach sprang out of it, as soon as ever we saw the dear lady, and above all, the Doctor in his cassock. What was the news? Was there yet time? Was the Queen alive? These questions were put hurriedly, as Boniface stood waiting before his noble guests to bow them up the stair.

“Is she safe?” was what Lady Castlewood whispered in a flutter to Esmond.

“All’s well, thank God,” says he, as the fond lady took his hand and kissed it, and called him her preserver and her dear. *She* wasn’t thinking of Queens and crowns.

The Bishop’s news was reassuring: at least all was not lost; the Queen yet breathed or was alive when they left London, six hours since, (“It was Lady Castlewood who insisted on coming,” the Doctor said;) Argyle had marched up regiments from Portsmouth, and sent abroad for more; the Whigs were on the alert, a pest

on them (I am not sure but the Bishop swore as he spoke), and so too were our people. And all might be saved, if only the Prince could be at London in time. We called for horses, instantly to return to London. We never went up poor crest-fallen Boniface's stairs, but into our coaches again. The Prince and his Prime-minister in one, Esmond in the other with only his dear mistress as a companion.

Castlewood galloped forwards on horseback to gather the Prince's friends, and warn them of his coming. We travelled through the night. Esmond discoursing to his mistress of the events of the last twenty-four hours ; of Castlewood's ride and his ; of the Prince's generous behaviour and their reconciliation. The night seemed short enough ; and the star-lit hours passed away serenely in that fond company.

So we came along the road ; the Bishop's coach heading ours ; and, with some delays in procuring horses, we got to Hammersmith about four o'clock on Sunday morning, the 1st of August, and half an hour after, it being then bright day, we rode by my Lady Warwick's house, and so down the street of Kensington.

Early as the hour was, there was a bustle in the street, and many people moving to and fro. Round the gate leading to the Palace, where the guard is, there was especially a great crowd. And the coach ahead of us stopped, and the Bishop's man got down to know what the concourse meant?

There presently came from out of the gate ; Horse Guards with their trumpets, and a company of heralds, with their tabards. The trumpets blew, and the herald-at-arms came forward and proclaimed GEORGE, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith. And the people shouted God save the King.

Among the crowd shouting and waving their hats, I caught sight of one sad face, which I had known all my life, and seen under many disguises. It was no other than poor Mr. Holt's, who had slipped over to England to witness the triumph of the good cause ; and now beheld its enemies victorious, amidst the acclamations of the English people. The poor fellow had forgot to huzzay or to take his hat off, until his neighbours in the crowd remarked his want of loyalty, and cursed

him for a Jesuit in disguise, when he ruefully uncovered and began to cheer. Sure he was the most unlucky of men : he never played a game but he lost it; or engaged in a conspiracy but 'twas certain to end in defeat. I saw him in Flanders after this, whence he went to Rome to the head-quarters of his Order ; and actually re-appeared among us in America, very old, and busy, and hopeful. I am not sure that he did not assume the hatchet and moccassins there ; and, attired in a blanket and war-paint, skulk about a Missionary amongst the Indians. He lies buried in our neighbouring province of Maryland now, with a cross over him, and a mound of earth above him ; under which that unquiet spirit is for ever at peace.

With the sound of King George's trumpets, all the vain hopes of the weak and foolish young Pretender were blown away ; and with that musick, too, I may say, the drama of my own life was ended. That happiness, which hath subsequently crowned it, cannot be written in words ; 'tis of its nature sacred and secret, and not to be spoken of, though the heart be ever so full of

thankfulness, save to Heaven and the One Ear alone—to one fond being, the truest and tenderest and purest wife ever man was blessed with. As I think of the immense happiness which was in store for me, and of the depth and intensity of that love, which, for so many years, hath blessed me, I own to a transport of wonder and gratitude for such a boon—nay, am thankful to have been endowed with a heart capable of feeling and knowing the immense beauty and value of the gift which God hath bestowed upon me. Sure, love *vincit omnia*; is immeasurably above all ambition, more precious than wealth, more noble than name. He knows not life who knows not that: he hath not felt the highest faculty of the soul who hath not enjoyed it. In the name of my wife I write the completion of hope, and the summit of happiness. To have such a love is the one blessing, in comparison of which all earthly joy is of no value; and to think of her, is to praise God.

It was at Bruxelles, whither we retreated after the failure of our plot—our Whig friends advising us to keep out of the way,—that the great joy of my life was bestowed upon me, and that my

dear mistres became my wife. We had been so accustomed to an extreme intimacy and confidence, and had lived so long and tenderly together, that we might have gone on to the end without thinking of a closer tie; but circumstances brought about that event, which so prodigiously multiplied my happiness and hers (for which I humbly thank Heaven), although a calamity befel us, which, I blush to think, hath occurred more than once in our house. I know not what infatuation of ambition urged the beautiful and wayward woman, whose name hath occupied so many of these pages, and who was served by me with ten years of such a constant fidelity and passion; but ever after that day at Castlewood, when we rescued her, she persisted in holding all her family as her enemies, and left us, and escaped to France, to what a fate I disdain to tell. Nor was her son's house a home for my dear mistres; my poor Frank was weak as perhaps all our race hath been and led by women. Those around him were imperious, and in a terror of his mother's influence over him, lest he should recant, and deny the creed which he had adopted by their persuasion. The difference of their

religion separated the son and the mother: my dearest mistress felt that she was severed from her children and alone in the world—alone but for one constant servant on whose fidelity, praised be Heaven, she could count. 'Twas after a scene of ignoble quarrel on the part of Frank's wife and mother (for the poor lad had been made to marry the whole of that German family with whom he had connected himself), that I found my mistress one day in tears, and then besought her to confide herself to the care and devotion of one who, by God's help, would never forsake her. And then the tender matron, as beautiful in her autumn, and as pure as virgins in their spring, with blushes of love and "eyes of meek surrender," yielded to my respectful importunity, and consented to share my home. Let the last words I write thank her, and bless her who hath blessed it.

By the kindness of Mr. Addison, all danger of prosecution, and every obstacle against our return to England, was removed; and my son Frank's gallantry in Scotland made his peace with the King's government. But we two cared no longer to live in England; and Frank formally and

joyfully yielded over to us the possession of that estate, which we now occupy, far away from Europe and its troubles, on the beautiful banks of the Potowmac, where we have built a new Castlewood, and think with grateful hearts of our old home. In our transatlantick country we have a season, the calmest and most delightful of the year, which we call the Indian summer: I often say the autumn of our life resembles that happy and serene weather: and am thankful for its rest and its sweet sunshine. Heaven hath blessed us with a child, which each parent loves for her resemblance to the other. Our diamonds are turned into ploughs and axes for our plantations; and into negroes, the happiest and merriest, I think, in all this country: and the only jewel by which my wife sets any store, and from which she hath never parted, is that gold button she took from my arm on the day when she visited me in prison, and which she wore ever after, as she told me, on the tenderest heart in the world.

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